

Regular teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of students with special needs into ordinary schools in Tbilisi

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with special needs into regular schools in Tbilisi. Furthermore, the study examined the attitudes of the teachers in relation to 'experience' and 'no experience' in inclusive education in order to determine whether there was difference in attitudes of the teachers who had experience in teaching at schools where inclusive education had already been introduced and at schools which do not have such experience. Moreover, the study attempted to ascertain the teachers' attitudes in relation to gender, teaching experience, teachers' educational background and school and class size.

300 teachers from inclusive/project schools and from other regular schools were selected to participate in this study. All schools selected were located in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi. The teachers' opinions were obtained using a questionnaire.

The study also interviewed two inclusive education specialists at the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in order to obtain information regarding the implementation of inclusive education in the country.

The data obtained by the questionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data analysis indicated overall positive attitudes among teachers towards the inclusion of learners with special needs into regular schools. The results also indicated that there was no statistical difference in attitudes towards inclusion in relation to 'experience' and 'no experience' in teaching at schools with inclusive education. The high statistical difference was indicated in attitudes in relation to working experience with children with special needs. Those teachers who worked at schools which had children with special needs were more positive to inclusion. Also teachers who had children with special needs in their classes were more positive to the philosophy of inclusion. Further, the results revealed differences in attitudes in relation to gender indicating that female teachers were more positive to include children with special needs than their male colleagues. The tendency of being

positive in attitude for the teachers who have less than 20 pupils in class, was also indicated in the findings of the study. The same tendency was detected among the teachers who taught in lower classes. Although the significance was not statistically important, the teachers in lower classes tended to be more positive to inclusion. The results detected the differences in attitudes in relation to the age of the teachers. Older teachers were more negative towards inclusion than younger teachers.

According to the findings of the study the improvement of pre-service training and retraining of in-service teachers is required.

Interview data analysis indicated the readiness of inclusive education promoters in Georgia to do their best in promoting inclusive education in the country. Lack of policy on inclusive education appears to be one of the main barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia.

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Dedication

To my dearest Lasha. Without your understanding and support this thesis would not exist.

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Chapter One: Background of the study

1.1 Introduction

Article 26 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declares that everyone has the right to education.

Moreover, the child's right to education is asserted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 28, which says that the education is to be achieved progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity. Furthermore, the Article 23 of the same convention states that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Recent international legislation has cast increasing spotlight on the philosophies of inclusion and inclusive schooling. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), states that every child has fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of training. Further, the statement proclaims regular schools with the inclusive orientation as the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.

Over past decades, it has no longer been taken for granted that pupils with disabilities attend schools for special education (Koster, M, Pijl, M, Jan, S, Houten, EV, Nakken, H 2007). Today, inclusion of children with special needs into ordinary schools has become a spread phenomenon throughout the world.

According to the above mentioned documents, all persons, regardless of their background, attainment or disability should receive an education and they should be full right members of a society.

Unfortunately, the reality offers a different picture and very few of the world's 150 million disabled children have had the benefit of basic services, such as health care and education. For example, United Nations' estimates indicate that only between 1 and 5 % of children with disabilities attend any form of school in developing countries. The vast majority are still largely excluded from education and from society, and experience daily violations of their basic human rights (Mittler 2004).

1.2 Research problem

Georgia has ratified international documents concerning the rights of people with disabilities, such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993).

However, Georgia is still struggling to achieve the main goals addressed in these documents.

Georgia attained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, Georgia has been building a democratic state based on the premises of International Human Rights and started to restructure the Educational System as well. Independence brought about fundamental changes of values from being Soviet to the values adopted from the Western Europe. However, the civil war in 1991 and armed conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have been weakening the process of restructuring the old system. The armed conflicts resulted in the internal displacement of approximately 280 000 people from which a large number were children. Both conflicts still remain unsolved with periods of relative peace changing into increased tensions and even acute events (Makhashvili & Javakishvili in Johnsen2005).

As part of the formal USSR, Georgia developed an education system with its strong and weak sides. The educational standards in Georgia were high; Education was free at all stages; primary and secondary education was mandatory. Nonetheless, education system suffered from Soviet ideology and politics. The Ministry of

Education and system of schooling were built on a principle of vertical subordination that excluded any chance of parity, tolerance, creativity, individuality and inclusion (Makhashvili & Javakhishvili in Johnsen 2005).

In the Soviet Union, children with special needs were marginalized or were excluded from education system. These children either stayed at home or were educated in separate, special schools and institutions; many of them went to boarding schools. These institutions were isolated from the majority of population.

After independence, in Georgia, different solutions were sought for the problems that existed but were hidden under communist regime.

However, still as in many areas of the former Soviet Union, professional services for Georgian citizens with disabilities are limited both in scope and nature. Persons with disabilities are seriously marginalized and some are institutionalized in conditions that have been described as violating basic civil rights. In Tbilisi and other parts of Georgia, children with disabilities are seldom observed in public, are rarely offered social and cultural accommodations common in many Western communities, and have limited access to special education or rehabilitation. (Hobbs, 2001, in Hobbs et al.2002).

According to the Constitution of Georgia everybody has the right to receive education and to choose the appropriate type of education. Yet, children with many different kinds of special needs are still excluded from the educational system.

The concept of inclusion has become a subject of discussions in Georgia in recent years and the process of implementing inclusive education is in its early phase.

As Georgia has so far no special law or policy on Inclusive education, the question of inclusive education is mainly regulated by the law on General Education of Georgia (2005). With regards to the legislative considerations supporting inclusive education, the main documents that serve as the basis for inclusive education in Georgia are the following:

- The state policy guidelines for protection of disabled children's rights in Georgia (February 13, 2004)
- Law of Georgia on Social Protection of Disabled People (June 14, 1995)
- Law of Georgia on General Education (August 4, 2005)

Here should also be mentioned the Governments Action Plan on Child Protection and Deinstitutionalization (2005). The main objective of this program is to promote socialization of marginalized children, who lack parental care. This goal has to be achieved by means of improving social protection mechanisms and returning the children to their biological families.

Although the law of Georgia on General Education (2005) makes the legal basis for the disabled children's education in Georgia, however, the analysis of this law explores that only the will of implementing inclusive education is expressed by the law without providing the main guidelines for implementing inclusive education¹ (Kharebava, M, Javakhishvili, J, Khufunia, N, Kobalia 2006).

Implementation of inclusion faces many barriers in Georgia as well as in other countries. Labelling and shame associated with disability are still strongly established in Georgia; consequently negatively loaded words referring to disability are still widely used; Social apathy, poor economy, infrastructure and negative attitudes toward people who are different is one of the main challenges and barriers to inclusion in Georgia.

Educators in Georgian educational institutions often have low expectations and beliefs that children with learning disabilities are uneducable, or children with emotional and behavioural disorders are incorrigible. In my opinion, in this early stage of introducing inclusive education investigation of teachers' opinions and attitudes is crucial. Teachers' voices should be heard and their concerns should be

¹ My translation

taken into consideration by policy makers, owing to the impact of teachers' positive attitudes on successful implementation of inclusive education is well documented.

Over the last several years many projects on introducing inclusive education have been carried out in Georgia by local and international Non- governmental organizations. But, it is overt, that inclusive education cannot straightway supplant special education. There is a need for changes in many aspects, but these changes to be occurred and to be successfully implemented, the attitudes towards inclusive education should be studied and negative attitudes should be changed.

The first pilot project on the national level on Introducing Inclusive Education for General Educational Institutions for ten schools in Tbilisi is launched by The Ministry of Education and Science and the National Curriculum and Assessment Centre with support from the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway. Upon successful implementation, the project will serve as a basis for the development of national policy for inclusive education and for introducing similar activities throughout the country (Project, Tbilisi 2005). One of the main priorities of this project is to train the teachers in respective schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools and determine the factors which influence their attitudes. I choose to investigate the attitudes of the teachers working in the project schools and the attitudes of the teachers working in other public schools, where inclusive education has not yet been introduced. Here I should clarify that the study was undertaken before the teachers received training within this project. Though, some of the teachers from both categories of schools have participated and received training arranged by nongovernmental organisations.

Therefore, the research problem of the study is to identify the attitudes of the teachers towards the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom and detect the factors which influence the teachers' attitudes.

Hence, the study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in schools without experience in inclusive education towards inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular schools?
2. What are the attitudes of teachers working in schools with experience in inclusive education towards inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular schools?
3. Is there any difference in attitudes between the teachers in pilot and other schools?
4. What is the view of Inclusive education promoters about the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia?

1.3 Justification and significance of the study

As indicated earlier, teachers and special needs educators are key persons in the development towards inclusive schools (Johnsen 2001 in Johnsen & Skjørten 2001). Teachers play a cardinal role in implementing quality education and consequently, teachers' positive attitudes are crucial for successful implementation of inclusive education. The justification of carrying out this study rests upon the fact that many children with special needs in many countries and in Georgia as well are still deprived the basic rights to get education besides their peers. Among many obstacles and challenges, the attitudes have been documented to be one of the main challenges people with disabilities experience in everyday life and so in education.

Georgia is gradually taking steps to move towards a more inclusive society. The above mentioned project on Introduction of Inclusive Education in General Educational Institutions for ten Schools in Tbilisi (2005), initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (2005) is regarded as a serious approach to the issue by the Georgian education stakeholders.

In the introduction of the project proposal there is stated that The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the organizations participating in the project

prioritize the development and introduction of new methodologies and approaches in order to ensure realization of educational rights of disabled children (Project, 2005).

The aim of this project is introducing inclusive education in ten schools of the capital city of Georgia and present related procedures to state organizations. Moreover, the project envisages development of state policy and strategy of inclusive education taking into account the experience received during the realization of the project and after its completion (Project-introduction, 2005).

Further, the project aims at providing information about principles and strategy of inclusive education to create the positive attitudes in the society (Project, 2005).

As inclusion is a comparatively new phenomenon for Georgia, a limited number of researches done in the very field do not give the overall picture of the reasons for slow implementation of inclusive education in Georgia.

The purpose of this survey study is to find out the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion of pupils with special needs into regular classrooms and to clarify the link between the teachers' attitudes and the variables influencing their attitudes. Among many interesting research problems, I found the attitudes of the teachers most interesting and current, because as mentioned above, many studies carried out in other countries show the significance of teachers' attitudes in successful implementation of inclusion. There are some (very few) studies undertaken on teachers' attitudes towards children with special needs in Georgia.

Professional attitudes may act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of policies. It is not surprising that an area of special education which has received considerable research attention is that of the attitudes of teachers, administrators and resource personnel towards the placement of students with special needs in the regular classroom (Avramidis, E, Bayliss, P, Burden 2000). Positive attitudes are crucial for inclusion because attitudes and beliefs held by educators toward inclusion significantly influence the learning environment and the use of appropriate

accommodations and negative attitudes are directly linked to less frequent use of effective classroom accommodations (Biddle 2006).

As stated earlier, there are many studies about inclusion worldwide. Teacher attitudes, as well as their behaviours, have been proposed as a key factor in successful inclusive education (Lindsay 2007, Felicia, W et al. 1997). Therefore, I think that without knowledge and understanding the importance of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, the development of inclusive practice will not succeed. Negative attitudes and low expectations are the challenges to inclusion. Countries with a history of separate provision for disabled and non-disabled children find it difficult to break down the barriers between them (Mittler 2004).

Many disabilities are created by the environment. The environment includes not only physical obstacles, such as inaccessible buildings, but also the whole range of legal, institutional, social, economic and cultural barriers to access and participation, including negative attitudes and under-expectations (Mittler 2004).

Because more and more children are and will be mainstreamed in ordinary schools in Georgia, it is essential that teachers are willing to work with them. Furthermore, the teachers should be able to teach all children irrespective of their backgrounds. Teachers' attitudes toward the children with special needs can influence the non-disabled peers' attitudes towards their disabled peers. Moreover, teachers' negative attitudes may make parents to be sceptical to have their children with special needs in regular classrooms if they do not trust the teacher's professionalism and his/her willingness to have a child with special needs in the classroom.

Promoting positive attitudes toward disability in general and inclusion in particular is critical considering that teachers who hold more favourable attitudes toward inclusion naturally implement instructional strategies that promote successful inclusion (Gibson & Dembo 1984; Bender et al. 1995, in Martinez 2003)

The issue of attitudes and attitude change is of a great importance in Georgian context as well, especially because Georgia is a formal communist totalitarian country and in

such societies people are often not presented with many choices. Under such circumstances, people`s decisions are likely determined by coercive pressures.

The above stated thoughts and concerns prompted this research.

The study may be significant for several reasons: being an integrated part of the first project on the national level on implementing inclusive education, the study will play an important role in an ongoing process of implementing inclusive education in Georgia by providing a general overview of attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in ordinary schools; It may help the government to understand what is the teachers`, as the key persons, opinions on inclusion; the findings of this study will contribute to further development of inclusive practices in Georgia; the study may help the stakeholders in designing a policy which will take the concerns of the teachers into consideration, therefore the study will also make recommendations for policy-makers and for other researchers; being one of the few studies in this field in Georgia, it will contribute in creating scientific knowledge in the field of educational research in Georgia.

1.4 A brief overview of the development of Georgian educational system

Georgia`s history is dating back more than 3000 years and is identified as one of the most ancient in the world. Georgian language is the only language in the Ibero Caucasian family written with ancient script, with its own unique alphabet; Christianity in Georgia was declared the state religion as early as 337; Educational traditions in Georgia go back to the period B.C.

After annexation by the Russian imperia and later by Bolsheviks, the Georgian system of education was integrated into the Soviet System of Education. The aim of the Soviet authorities has always been the building of a new kind of society, and they have used the educational system, deliberately and consciously, as a means of attaining this goal (Grant 1979).

The building of the Soviet society demanded the energetic propagation of communist ideas, and the schools were used for this too-directly as vehicles for the teaching of loyalty to the regime, and indirectly in providing the literature necessary for the dissemination of propaganda by newspaper, broadsheet, and poster. Not only basic policy, but the content of the curriculum, schemes of work, textbooks, teaching methods, and the like were prescribed for the teacher in considerable detail. Literacy in USSR became virtually universal. Every class was expected to have a complete cross-section of ability, from the brilliant to the plodder, all doing the same courses at the same pace (Grant 1979).

In the Soviet Union, classroom organization and teaching methods were prescribed by the central authorities. Curriculum was the same throughout the USSR; Lecturing was the main method used by teachers. Children were considered as passive learners by the teachers.

Communist ideology implied that the “collective”, or nation, was more important, than the individual. During Soviet times, individual life was considered less important than the triumph of the Soviet state. Further, the Soviet government typically did not want to recognize individuals who differed from the norm of strength; the artwork from the Soviet era often portrayed the Soviet man and woman as vibrantly strong and sturdy (Maritz 2005).

Communist governments were reluctant to admit that their countries had the same proportion of people with psychiatric conditions or intellectual disabilities as Western countries. The regime offered two "solutions." The least violent was for them to stay with their families, who would hide them away from their neighbours' eyes. Or they would be warehoused—and largely abandoned—in state institutions, where the quality of life could sometimes be on par with that of a prison camp (Inclusion International, 2004).

The common attitude towards persons with special needs and the peculiar understanding of disabilities is reflected by the special term “defectologist” that was used to designate professionals working in the sphere (Makhashvili & Javakhishvili

in Johnsen 2005). The word *defect* was used throughout the Soviet era (Grigorenko 1998 in Martz 2005). Defectology was defined as the study and education of children and adults with disabilities (Martz, 2005). Defectology had its theoretical basic in the writings of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Although, Lev Vygotsky viewed disability as social ‘dislocation’ (not refusing the primacy of biology, Rodina 2008), the medical approach to disability in Soviet Union and hence in Georgia was established.

The fact that the field of defectology is so broad and covers such a variety of different conditions has served as a guarantee that the terms *defectology* and *defective child* will not become stigmatic. Disability was not stigmatized, it was simply ignored. It was ignored by the official structures (no handicapped entrance or transportation), and it was ignored by the mass media (no discussions, movies, or books about handicapped people (Grigorenko 1998). In the former USSR, disability was considered unspeakable and invisible (Fefelov 1986, in Grigorenko 1998).

Soviet system traditionally ignored the light and mild severity conditions in school children, such as symptoms of social problems, aggressive behaviours of children.

The essence of Soviet theories of disability lay in the assumption that, apart from their disabling condition, there was a unifying element that bound diverse categories of disabled people together. This unifying element was their “defect”. Due to the generality of the psychological meaning of “defect” in medicine and pedagogy, and the corresponding overlap in disabilities, a holistic tradition (*defectologia*) of treating such individuals became entrenched. Whereas the West became ashamed of and embarrassed by the use of the word *defective* to describe individuals with disabilities, and replaced it with the word *handicapped* during the 1930s, there was no going back for Soviet defectology. The term had become too well established, too widely discussed, too politically loaded, and too “Soviet” (Grogorenko 1998).

The word *defectologia* literally means “Study of defect” (Gindis 1999). This term covers the following disabilities: children who are hard of hearing and deaf (surdo-pedagogika), children who are visually impaired and blind (tiflo-pedagogika),

children with mental retardation (oligophreno-pedagogika), and children who are speech- language impaired (logopedia). Children with socio-emotional disorders, psychological or behaviour disorders and learning disabilities were not served under defectology.

The common attitudes towards people with disabilities included the view that disability was a tragedy and the people with disabilities were to be pitied.

Only the children with serious learning disabilities caused by severe impairments were served by defectologia. The children with for example socio-emotional and behavioural problems received education in ordinary schools and were considered as low, but satisfactory, achievers. Their needs for special adaptation were simply ignored. The general practice was to allow them to finish 8 class (which covered compulsory education) and then send them to vocational schools. In Soviet education curriculum was designed for “normal” children. This tradition of having “low-achiever” or “underachiever” children in the schools without considering them as children in need of a different instruction and more flexible curriculum is still common in Georgian schools. To this category of low or under- achievers belong also children with socio-emotional or behaviour problems where these problems result in learning difficulties. Learning difficulties have not yet been recognized as a serious problem and causes the confusion among teachers when discussing the category of children with special needs.

Since independence, in Georgia, changes occurred in public opinion about the disability and the field of special education has to deal with the shift to the social view of disability. Nevertheless, the current educational system, despite many changes is still close to the old system and most children with learning difficulties are neglected while attending regular classrooms; they are excluded while being physically included. Hence, it is a process where much has to be done in order to offer a welcoming learning environment for all children regardless of their abilities. Inclusion implies that all children receive education on the way that is appropriate for every individual. At present, special education system in Georgia is following the

recommendations on substituting old methods with new ones, but the problem is that the recommendations are not clear in specific aspects and they provide educators with general information that is not sufficient to deal with children with different kinds of special needs.

In the analysis of barriers and opportunities in an independent state of the former Soviet Union, Georgia, Hobbs and Gerzmava (2002) describe the barriers and opportunities to inclusion that is both similar with other countries and that are specific to Georgia. Some problems/barriers they mention are that Georgian teachers feel uninformed, untrained and unsupported and they lack educational experience with non-typical children. Lack of experience in educational and social service teamwork is also considered as a barrier to inclusion in Georgia.

Among the strengths and opportunities to inclusion, the authors state the following points: literate/educated population, strong universities, Improving legislative base and governmental awareness, strong family traditions, international support etc.

To conclude, as everywhere in the world, so in Georgia, there are many challenges and opportunities to implementation of inclusive education. Although Georgia has taken steps forward to more inclusive society, the country has a long way to go to far-reaching implementation of inclusive education.

1.4 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters.

Chapter one contains the background, justification and significance of the study. The chapter also suggest a brief overview of the soviet system of education and the current situation for the most vulnerable groups of children in Georgia today.

Chapter two reviews the literature relevant to this study and the theories of attitudes and inclusion. Further it looks on the medical and social aspects of disability and discusses the importance of teacher training.

Chapter three describes the methodology used for the data collection. This chapter also looks at validity and reliability issues and research ethics.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data.

Chapter five outlines the findings, conclusions and ideas for further research and also suggests recommendations for policy makers.

At the end of the thesis the references and appendices are stated.

2. Chapter Two: Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction

This study involves the investigation of the attitudes of regular teachers towards the inclusion of children with special needs. The term ‘special needs education’ has come into use as a replacement for the term ‘special education’. The older term was mainly understood to refer to the education of children with disabilities that takes place in special schools or institutions distinct from, and outside of, the institutions of the regular school and university system. Moreover, the concept of ‘children with special educational needs’ extends beyond those who may be included in handicapped categories to cover those who are failing in school for a wide variety of other reasons that are known to be likely to impede a child’s optimal progress (UNESCO, ISCED 1997).

The study compares attitudes of the teachers working at schools with experience in inclusive education (project schools) and attitudes of teachers from schools without experience in inclusive education. Due to the limited number of the schools in Georgia in which inclusive education has been introduced, a great majority of teachers in Georgia work at schools without any experience in inclusive education. For the purpose of this study the teachers with experience in inclusive education were sampled within the 10 project schools, while the teachers from schools without experience in inclusive education were randomly sampled in 6 general schools in Tbilisi.

Although, the spectrum of children with special needs is very broad meaning different categories of children in need, the study concerns itself with an investigation of the attitudes towards including children with visual impairment, physical impairment, emotional and behavioural disabilities, learning disabilities, mental disabilities, hearing Impairment, and gifted and talented children. Prior to the study, investigation of attitudes toward including of all children at any kind of risk was considered by the researcher, but due to the fact that in Georgia children with

special needs are still strongly associated with the needs which were served by defectology², teachers have difficulties to understand that children with for example learning disabilities and minority children are also considered under this category in western cultures.

The questions about the inclusion of minority or bilingual children, or so called “street children”, might confuse teachers and the results might not be reliable. Thus, the researcher tried to avoid confusion the insufficient awareness of the issues regarding special needs and inclusion might cause. Although, the project on introducing inclusive education in 10 schools in Tbilisi defines the children with special needs as any pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion (Project, 2005), the questionnaire employed in this study did not look at all categories (Appendix 1 A, 1B).

This chapter includes an overview of related literature on attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education, the nature of inclusion, the development path from segregation to integration /inclusion, the definition of attitudes and the theories of attitude change. Furthermore, it includes the discussion concerning medical and social aspects of disability and training of teachers.

2.2 An overview of related studies

Similar studies on attitudes towards inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools have been undertaken in different countries. The term integration, mainstreaming and inclusion are used by different researchers and are often used interchangeably (Avramidis, E & Norwich, B 2002). However, all studies discussed here are interested in classrooms with a broad diversity.

A study by Romi and Leyser (2006), on exploring inclusion pre-service needs indicated that experience in working with children and youth with disabilities was associated with a more positive view about the benefits of inclusion and with fewer

² Explained in Chapter 1

concerns about behaviour difficulties in inclusive classrooms. Findings in this study also revealed that gender influenced both attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs: female students had more positive views about inclusion than male students and also had higher self-efficacy beliefs (Romi & Leyser 2006).

Another study carried out by Opdal and Wormnaes (2001) investigating teachers' opinions about inclusion in Palestine, indicated that exposure and experience with students with certain disabilities had an influence on teacher attitudes towards a positive disposition. For example, the teachers who had experience with students with physical disabilities were most supportive to the idea of including students with the same disabilities. The students considered less "includable" by the teachers were students with behaviour problems and learning difficulties that may affect reading, writing or arithmetic. In addition to the type of disability, the severity of the disability also seemed to have an influence on teachers' levels of acceptance. None of the teachers mentioned students with intellectual disabilities as "includable". The participants of the study, who were working in schools with adapted buildings to the needs of students with disabilities, were significantly more positive towards inclusion than the other teachers. 51% of the teachers mentioned that they needed better qualifications.

Subban and Sharma (2006), in their study of primary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in Victoria, signified that the teachers who had taken a prior specialized training in teaching students with disabilities appeared to hold more positive attitudes than the teachers who had not undertaken such training.

In the study of the influence of an inclusive education Course on attitude change of Pre-service Secondary Teachers in Hong Kong, Stella et al. (2007) found that even a short 20-hour module can bring about some significant changes in teachers' knowledge, attitudes and confidence level toward inclusion. Further, in this study significant difference was found between male and female respondents in attitudes and concerns. While male pre-service teachers indicated a decreased willingness to

include students with physical aggression, their female colleagues indicated an increasing willingness to include them.

In the survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion, Avramidis et al. (2000) found that the participants demonstrated positive attitudes towards the general concept of inclusion. However, the participants asked about support, resources, training and time. Further, a significant difference was found in relation to professional development indicating that teachers with substantial training in special education held significantly higher positive attitudes than those with little or no training about inclusion.

Another survey undertaken by Avramidis et al. (2000) into student teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school, revealed that the respondents held positive attitudes towards the general concept of inclusion but their attitudes were much dependent upon the severity of children's needs. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were seen as potentially causing more concern and stress than those with other types of special needs. The results also revealed that female teachers held more positive attitudes than male teachers.

The analysis of the literature about the teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion, done by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), revealed evidence of positive attitudes, but no evidence of acceptance of a total inclusion or "zero reject" approach to special educational provision. They found teachers' attitudes to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition (child-related variables) and less by teacher-related variables.

Leyser, Y, Cumblad, C, Strickman, D (1986), in a study of the impact of intervention programme to modify attitudes toward the handicapped, indicated that female teachers benefited more from the intervention with regard to attitudinal changes, as compared to males.

A study of general and special teachers attitudes toward inclusion, undertaken by Elhoweis and Alsheik (2006), revealed that the teachers held positive attitudes. However, some differences were found between the attitudes of general and special education teachers. In general, the results of this study were consistent with the findings of the previous studies that proposed that the amount of training or experience the teachers had in teaching students with disabilities is related to teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

Kimani (2006) in his Master's thesis reported a high statistical significant difference in attitudes towards inclusion of learners with special needs into regular schools between teachers with "no training" and those "trained" in special needs. Teachers trained in special needs education were more positively inclined to inclusive education. The results indicated that training and practice in special needs education are important factors in the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Findings of the Master's thesis by Muleya (2006) on the study of attitudes of basic school teachers towards inclusive education in the Southern province of Zambia revealed that basic school teachers had negative attitudes towards the practice of inclusion in ordinary schools. Results also indicated that female teachers had more positive attitudes compared to that of male teachers. Moreover, experience in teaching children with special needs has some positive influence on the attitudes.

The study of Ali, MM, Mustapha, R, Jelas, M.Z (2006) indicated that teachers had positive perception towards the implementation of the inclusive education programme. However, some aspects such as the collaboration between the mainstream and special education teachers and the preparation to train regular teachers in handling and teaching students with special needs can be improved.

The study by Loreman and Earle (2007) about the Development of Attitudes, Sentiments and Concerns about Inclusive Education in a Content-Infused Canadian Teacher Preparation Program, indicated that male participants were more concerned about inclusive education. Previous experience with teaching children with disabilities has also been found to play a role in changing sentiments towards people

with disabilities, supporting the importance of teacher education. Over the program the student-teachers increased knowledge and confidence in teaching children with disabilities.

Alghazo and Gaad (2004) investigated the general education teachers' acceptance of inclusion of students with disabilities in the United Arab Emirates and found that the teachers, in general, tended to have negative attitudes towards including students with disabilities in regular education classrooms. Results also indicated that male teachers had more negative attitudes towards including persons with disabilities in the regular classrooms than their female counterparts.

In the analysis of barriers and opportunities to inclusive education in Post Soviet Georgia, Hobbs and Gerzmava (2005) ascertained the teachers' feeling of being uninformed, untrained and unsupported as one of the main problems/barriers to inclusion in Georgia. Georgian teachers reported that they received little training, coursework or educational support regarding the needs of children with disabilities. The teachers generally supported inclusive education, but they felt unprepared for these additional changes.

The survey study of teachers, children's and parents' attitudes toward inclusion/integration of children with special needs at Gymnasium 6 in Tbilisi, carried out by Malashkia, Gulisashvili and Lodia (2003), revealed that 75 % of educators in the Gymnasium was familiar with only two kinds of disabilities: physical disabilities and mental retardation. The results revealed that the educators lacked information about the disability (what is meant by disability) as they regarded such children as sick. The results indicated also that the lack of information leads to an undesirable attitude. Most of the informants had never had any contact with people with disabilities. For some of the educators treating such children alike others seemed unimaginable which may be explained out of pity. The teachers felt that they could not punish them for a bad behaviour. Further, the study revealed insufficient awareness and not unanimous attitude to the issue in the society in Georgia.

A qualitative study on the attitudes of the society towards inclusive education (2007) was undertaken within the same project on Introduction of Inclusive Education in General Educational Institutions for ten Schools in Tbilisi. The results of this study revealed that many teachers work in inclusive setting without having any training in inclusive education. Although the teachers with experience in inclusive education expressed positive attitudes toward inclusion, the researchers found out that the teachers were not honest in their opinions. Their attitudes were more negative than positive. When being asked about the opinion, the teachers answered that they supported inclusive education however the results indicated that their genuine attitude to inclusion was negative. The teachers without experience in inclusive education expressed that ‘they favour special settings for children with disabilities in order inclusive education to be implemented’³. Which means that they were against the main principle of inclusive education. The researchers ascertained that the teachers were not fully informed about the philosophy of inclusive education. Teachers with experience thought that children with some specific kind of disabilities should not be included into regular schools. According to them it was unacceptable to have children with aggressive behaviour in a class as it might be dangerous for other children. They also felt that neither the children with severe conditions should attend a regular class as it will not lead to any outcomes and will be a disadvantage for other children in the process of knowledge acquisition. Teachers without experience indicated that children with physical disabilities might attend regular class, but for those with mental disabilities the special setting was necessary. The teachers felt that the important part of the preparation for inclusive education was the training of the teachers and stimulation of discussions among/with them. Both categories of the teachers indicated that they did not know how to work with children with special needs and how to plan a lesson in a situation when some students needed individual education plans. Further teachers showed insufficient awareness about the issues concerning children with special needs. One of the teachers meant that it went without saying that a child with Cerebral Pares was also mentally disabled.

³ My translation

A sociological study undertaken by the Association of Disabled Women and Mothers of Disabled Children –DEA (2006), in Zugdidi, Georgia, indicated that the majority of the teachers did not consider inclusion of children with disabilities as his/her priority. At the same time, the educators felt certain that the educators' awareness should be improved. The educators indicated that the system of education in Georgia today was not ready for inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools. Inaccessibility of the school buildings, lack of special tools (devices) in the classrooms, difficulties with public transport were mentioned as the main barriers to inclusion. The educators also underlined the insufficient professionalism of the educators and at the same time, lack of the University course and literature were also mentioned as barriers to inclusion. However, regardless of the problems, the educators favored inclusive education and indicated that it would contribute to the integration of persons with disabilities in the society and on the other hand, it would develop the tolerance and improve the situation with regard to human rights.

2.3 The concept of inclusion: Definition and Nature

Exclusion and segregation from the society and accordingly from the education system has a long history worldwide. In almost every country two systems of education have been coexisting: special and regular schools.

In Europe, the first “special schools” were founded approximately 200 years ago. At the beginning they were built for people with sensory impairments. These early schools belonged to private philanthropic organizations and government involvement came in much later (Kisanji 1999). Between 1900 and 1950, special education concerned only a small percentage (about 1%) of the total pupil population and was for the most part provided in socially segregated special schools. Since 1970 radical changes have occurred and special education has been expanded to support pupils in all local schools, children of pre-school age, young people in upper secondary schools, and adults and elderly people with special education needs (Befring & Tangen 2001 in Befring 2001).

Thereafter the normalization and de-institutionalization processes started. Wolfenberg (1972 in Kisanji 1999) defines normalization as utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviours and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible.

Then the movement of integration from segregated settings into the society and accordingly into regular schools came to agenda. *Integration* became a key concept in education and remained the main issue on the agenda until the end of the 1980s. However during the 1990s the term *inclusion* has captured the field. The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in 1994, with the adoption of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, represents the event that definitely set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis (UNESCO 1994 in Vislie 2003).

Booth and Ainscow (2002) describe the institutional discrimination as much wider than racism. Racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and disablism share a common root in intolerance to difference and the abuse of power to create and perpetuate inequalities. According to them, making schools more inclusive may involve people in a painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes.

Inclusion implies a restructuring of mainstream schooling that every school can accommodate every child irrespective of disability ('Accommodation' rather 'assimilation') and ensures that all learners belong to a community (Avramidis & Norwich 2002).

There is no single, universally agreed definition of "Inclusion" (Mittler 2004). Inclusive education is a complex, dynamic, socio-political process that involves social change (Felicia 1997).

Inclusion starts from a recognition of the differences between students. Inclusion in education involves: valuing all students and staff equally; increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools; restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in

schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality; reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as “having special needs”; learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely; viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome. Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality; improving schools for staff as well as for students; emphasizing the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as increasing achievement; recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society; developing inclusion involves reducing exclusionary pressures; inclusion is about minimizing *all* barriers in education for *all* students (Booth & Ainscow 2002).

Mittler (2004) shares the same vision that inclusion in school is at the heart of inclusion in society, not only for disabled children but for all children. He claims that Inclusive schools are the key to a more inclusive society in which diversity and difference are welcomed and form part of the experience of all children in the community.

Inclusive education cannot be seen as a specific issue, but must be regarded as an approach to the development of the entire school system (UNESCO 2004). It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO 1994).

According to Vislie (2003), if inclusive education is to advance, much is to be done in order to prove that the move from integration to inclusion must not be only a linguistic shift, but a real change. Inclusion will also have to lean on new sights as did integration by challenging the special education segregated practice by bringing new sights into the field.

2.4 The concept of attitudes: Definition and nature

The concept of attitudes is a fundamental construct in social sciences. In fact, the field of social psychology was originally defined as the scientific study of attitudes. (Thomas & Znaniecki 1918; Watson 1925 in Albarracin et al. 2005). The field is vast and diverse. Accordingly, the research on attitudes has been very important.

The definitions of attitudes have varied across the time. However, evaluative aspects have always played a dominant role in definitions (Albarracin et al. 2005).

This thesis employs the definition of attitudes provided by Eagly and Chaiken (1993). They define attitude as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. Like many other constructs, attitudes are not directly observable but can be inferred from observable responses. This definition of attitudes as an evaluative tendency, presumes that attitude is an evaluative state that intervenes between certain classes of stimuli and certain classes of responses. Evaluation is done with respect to some entity or thing that is the object of the evaluation. Thus, these entities are known as attitude objects. Some of them are abstract and some are concrete. In general, anything that is discriminated or that becomes in some sense an object of thought can serve as an attitude object.

The importance of attitudes becomes apparent at various levels of analysis: At the *Individual level*, attitudes influence perception, thinking, other attitudes and behaviour. Accordingly, attitudes contribute heavily to a person's psychological make-up. At the *interpersonal level*, information about attitudes is routinely requested and communicated. If we know others attitudes, the world becomes a more predictable place. Our own thought and behaviour may be shaped by this knowledge, and we may try to control others' behaviour by changing their attitudes. At the *social level*, attitudes toward one's own groups and other groups are at the core of intergroup cooperation and conflict. A negative out-group attitude or prejudice can cause discriminatory behaviour or even direct violence (Bohner & Wanke 2002).

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) claims that as a result of having evaluated an entity with some degree of favour or disfavour, the individual may assign evaluative meaning of the entity. The individual would then possess an attitude, which is an internal state that endures for at least a short period of time and presumably energizes and directs the behaviour.

2.5 Attitude structure

Psychologists have often ascribed structural properties to attitudes. Such structural properties describe the internal structure of attitudes and the term structure also implies relationship between attitudes. Thus, we refer to them as *Intra-attitudinal* structure which refers the way in which an attitudes is presented in memory; and *Inter-attitudinal* structure which deals with the question how attitudes toward different attitude objects are related to each other in a person`s mind. Inter-attitudinal attitudes may be formed between attitudes toward issue and attitudes toward people. These connections between attitudes develop as a product of social interaction (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

Political scientists and social psychologists have assumed that, at least for some people, attitudes are components of larger structures that take the form of *ideologies* (Kinder & Sears 1982; McGuire 1985 in Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

The strengths of attitudes have been regarded as causing people to resist changing their attitudes. *Attitude strength* more or less reflects the intensity of one`s feelings and beliefs. The general assumption is that strong attitudes are difficult to change. At the heart of functional perspectives is the idea that people hold and express attitudes for different reasons and that knowledge of the motivational basis for an attitude is a key to understand how it can be changed (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

Bassili and Brown (in Albarracin et al. 2005) indicate the importance of understanding of implicit or automatic psychological processes as powerful contributors to thought and behaviour. Implicit attitude are unconscious or not accessible to introspections. According to them implicit attitudes are important

because of their potentially immediate impact on social functioning, and because cognitive methodologies can be used to identify evaluative reactions over which participants have little control. Therefore, a comprehensive theory of attitudes must be able to accommodate characteristics of implicit and explicit attitude expression.

The fact that a person can hold more than one attitude toward the same attitude object makes attitude a more complex phenomenon. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), this is manifested by the concept of attitudinal ambivalence. Another manifestation of the multiple attitude idea is Wilson, Lindsey, and Schooler's (2000) conception of dual attitudes, by which people hold an implicit attitude and an explicit attitude toward the same attitude object. Wilson et al. (2000) assumed that generally only one of the attitudes is active. Such bipartite attitudes can arise, for example, when new information changes an attitude, creating a new explicit attitude. Yet the old attitude may continue to be present, but often in implicit form.

2.6 The tripartite Analysis of Attitudes.

For the purposes of this study the tripartite model of attitudes was adopted. This three component model is based on the idea that an attitude is manifested in cognitive, affective and behavioural responses and formed on the basis of cognitive, affective and behavioural processes. The *cognitive* category contains thoughts that people have about the attitude object (beliefs and opinions). The *affective* category consists of feelings or emotions that people have in relation to the attitude object (Those thoughts are often conceptualized as beliefs, where beliefs are understood to be associations or linkages that people establish between attitude object and various attributes.). The *behavioural* category encompasses peoples' actions with respect to the attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

However, attitudes not necessarily have all three of these aspects. Attitudes can be formed on the basis of any one of the three types of processes.

According to this model, attitudes are viewed as being complex and multidimensional and when we measure attitudes we measure, in fact, aspects or attributes of the attitudes in which we are interested (Avramidis et al. 2000).

The relationship between attitudes and behaviours is complex and not always straightforward (Bohner & Wanke 2002). Attitude-behaviour relations have long been a theme of research. Many studies found that Attitudes are more predictive of behaviour when behaviour is also measured in the same broad manner as attitudes and not only specific behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein 1969; Eagly & Chaiken 1993, in Kemldal (2000). But, the fact that other factors besides attitudes may also influence behaviour, make this attitude-behaviour relationship complex (Kemdal 2000).

It is also assumed that strong attitudes are better predictors of behaviour than weak attitudes (Petty & Krosnik 1995 in Bohner & Wanke 2002).

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen 1985; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975 in Eagly & Chaiken 1993) claims that attitudes affect intentions, which in turn affect behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

In the 1960s, affect became an established concept in attitude research. For example, Rosenberg (1956) introduced the concept attitudinal affect, and it became popular to distinguish an affective component of attitudes from its cognitive and behavioural counterparts (Albarracin 2005).

Affective experiences vary in intensity, duration, and frequency. These aspects of affective experiences can play different roles in the formation of attitude (Shimmack & Crites in Albarracin 2005). Different types of affective experience have different origins and have different consequences for the formation and change of attitudes.

Social relations create and are crated by attitudes. All attitudes are social in the sense that they develop, function, and change in reciprocal relation with the social context (Prislin & Wood 2005, in Albarracin 2005).

In summary, the term attitude is reserved for evaluative tendencies, which can both be inferred from and have an influence on beliefs, affect, and behaviour. Thus, affect, beliefs, and behaviours are seen as interacting with attitudes rather than as being their part.

2.7 Theories of attitude change

With attitude change we mean when an evaluation moves from one position to another (Albarracin 2005). On the assumption that attitudes are complex in nature, the change of attitudes have also been an interest of both theorists and researchers over the years. Therefore, theories of attitude change come in many variants. People hold and express attitudes for different reasons and the knowledge of the motivational basis for an attitude is the key to understanding how it can be changed (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

Many different processes contribute to the formation and change of attitudes. Attitudes can be to some degree influenced by genetic or they may also be acquired. In addition to environmental factors and genetic dispositions, the interaction of both may explain part of the variance in attitudes based more on chronically accessible information than on temporarily accessible information will be more stable across contexts than attitudes that are primarily made up of temporarily accessible information. However, even attitudes primarily based on temporarily accessible information may reflect stability over time if the context remains stable over time. It may happen that even when attitudes stored in memory exist, new attitudes may be constructed if old attitudes are either not accessible or not appropriate. Despite the construction of new attitudes, previous attitudes may not be overwritten (Bohner & Wanke 2002).

Some attitudes are enduring, in some cases formed in early childhood and carried through one's lifetime. Other attitudes are formed but then are changed. Still other attitudes are formed but not subsequently elicited and thus they recede or, in effect, disappear from the psych (Albarracin 2005).

Attitude strength refers how impactful and durable the attitudes are (Albarracin 2005). Strong attitudes are assumed to be more resistant to change, more persistent over time and more consistent with behaviour (e.g. Petty, Haugtvedt & Smith, 1995, in Bohner & Wanke 2002).

Attitudes often change over time as a result of any influences, including persuasive messages received from other people and the impact of one's own attitude-relevant behaviour. Theories of attitude change generally follow from assumptions that certain cognitive, affective, or motivational processes mediate attitude change. Persuasion research addresses the questions how attitudes are formed and changed as a result of information processing, usually in response to messages about the attitude object. Resistant to attitude change has different causes. These causes can be classified into motivational and cognitive classes. From a motivational standpoint, people resist influence because change is threatening to the self or to one's personal freedom or merely to the stability of important, self-defining attitudes. From a cognitive standpoint, people resist influence when an attitude is linked to other attitudes and beliefs, and change in the attitude would therefore destabilize a larger cognitive structure. In addition, the linkages of attitudes to other cognitions give people intellectual resources that allow them to scrutinize and ward off attacks on their attitudes. More generally, attitudes that are motivationally significant and that are linked to many other attitudes and beliefs can be considered strong. Attitude strength develops over time. Weaker or newly formed attitudes are generally relatively unstable and open to change; their affect on information processing can be difficult to discern, and their relation to behaviour is slight. In contrast, older attitudes, if they have become strong, are more stable and closed to change; they have a more pronounced effect on information processing and a stronger relation to behaviour. In (more) totalitarian societies, people's choices are typically constrained, because of both a relative lack of alternatives and the use of more coercive forms of political and economic control (Bohner & Wanke 2002).

Brinol and Petty (2005) in Albarracin (2005), discuss the role of individual differences in attitude change. Most of them were organized as motivational

variables. Among non motivational variables they discuss demographic, ability and cultural factors. Women are sometimes viewed as more easily persuaded than men. Although this difference may reflect a cultural stereotype, research has tended to show that women are more susceptible to influence than men (Cooper 1979; Janis & Field 1959 in Albarracin 2005). The basis for this difference may be early socialization experiences because women are expected to conform and maintain harmony (Hovland & Janis 1959; Eagly & Wood 1991 in Albarracin 2005). These expectations might suggest that gender could be particularly related to the motive of social approval. Eagly and Carl in Albarracin in 2005) noted that some of the gender effect may be attributed to the nature of the influence topic and to the content of the message arguments. But, gender differences can be undermined or eliminated in many aspects. Many researches suggest that there may not be much of gender difference in persuadability once other factors are controlled (e.g., knowledge differences). Thus, it is not clear if gender affects persuasion or not.

Research suggests also that the attitudes of young are less stable and they are more open to new suggestions and hypnosis.

A classic social psychological finding is that multiple exposures to another person often create more positive attitudes toward that person (e.g., Saegert, S & Zajonc, 1973, in Albarracin 2005).

2.8 The medical and social aspects of disability

The medical perspective on disability was gradually changed by social view on disability over the past decades. In medical approach, the disability is seen as a medical problem, and the person with disability is considered a patient.

It is now accepted that the origins of exclusion and marginalization that disabled people experience in all countries lie in the interactions between the individual and the environment. This is known as the social model of disability (Mittler 2004).

Shift from approaching to disability as a medical issue to the approach which recognizes it as a human right issue and also recognizes that people with disabilities are full members of the society led to social view on disability. This approach realizes that the environment is often more obstacle than impairment itself.

The medical model of disability has led to the focusing of attention on diagnosis with subsequent highlighting of problems and weaknesses in the individual, labelling and stigmatisation, and overreliance on problem identification rather than teaching and learning.

According to the social model of disability, disability is not just a person-environment relationship. Disability is a consequence of a society that is not adapted to all people. Within such a perspective, human variation (including the fact that some people are impaired) is taken for granted. The political challenge is to change the environment in order to create equal opportunities for larger portions of the human variation-to recreate the environment in order to “fit” more people.

‘In a pure biomedical perspective, disability policy is about prevention and/or treatment (medical, psychological or educational) of the individual, and if this is not possible, the construction of special environments. In the social perspective, the point is to change the environment, and in particular, the man-made part of it’ (Tøssebro 2000, p.4).

‘A social model analysis shows the key priorities for action: barrier removal; citizenship rights; anti-discrimination legislation’ (Shakespeare 2000, p.11).

‘Another alternative to the medical model is an educational perspective in which the focus is on learning. Such an alternative employs and builds upon individual’s existing personal repertoire (strengths and resources). A learning model seeks to understand what the person can achieve, rather than pinpointing the weaknesses’ (Befring 2001, p.51). The focus on what a person is capable of is the aim of pedagogical assessment.

‘According to the social model, barriers to learning and participation can exist in the nature of the setting or arise through an interaction between students and their contexts: the people, policies, institutions, cultures, and social and economical circumstances that affect their lives’ (Booth and Ainscow 2002, p.6).

Vygotsky (1993, in Rodina, 2008:16)⁴ distinguishes between primary, secondary and tertiary (cultural distortions of socially conditioned, higher mental functions) disabilities. *Primary* disability is an organic impairment, that leads to the child’s “exclusion” from the socio-cultural, traditional and educational environment-in turn causing *secondary* (socio-cultural) disability.

Vygotsky 1995 in Gindis (1999), pointed out that the primary problem of a disability is not the organic impairment itself, but its social implications: An organic defect is recognized by society as a social abnormality in behaviour. Expectations and attitudes of social milieu and conditions created by the society influence the access of a child with disability to socio cultural knowledge, experiences, and opportunity to acquire psychological tools. Changing negative societal attitudes toward individuals with disabilities should be one of the goals of special education.

Index for inclusion (2002) suggests using “barriers to learning and participation” for the difficulties that students encounter, rather than the term “special educational needs”. This is also a part of social model of disability. ‘It contrasts with a medical model in which difficulties in education are seen to arise from deficiencies or impairments in a child or young person’(p.6).

Disabilities are barriers to participation for students with impairments or chronic illness. Disabilities may be created in the environment or by the interaction of discriminatory attitudes, actions, cultures, policies and institutional practices with impairment, pain or chronic illness. Impairment can be defined as a long term “limitation of physical, intellectual or sensory function”. While there is little that school can do to overcome impairments, they can considerably reduce the disabilities

⁴ In Press

produced by discriminatory attitudes and actions and institutional barriers (Booth & Ainscow 2002, p.6).

2.9 The training of teachers

Professional development of teachers on providing quality education is crucial as it increases their confidence in teaching children with special needs which leads to the change of attitude to the positive disposition. The teacher acts as a mediator, and the effectiveness of innovation very much depends on the teacher making proper use of them. The teacher is at the epicentre of the learning process and learning therefore depends first and foremost on the quality of the teacher (Avramidis et al.2000); Subban & Sharma 2006; Stella et al. 2007).

But, unfortunately, professional training of teachers as it is organized in many countries, is not effective (UNESCO 2007).

In the movement towards a more inclusive education system, the need to provide teachers with professional knowledge and skills to work with children with diverse needs increases. Consideration needs to be given to the quality of teacher education programmes such that teachers may feel more confident and competent to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom in their future teaching role (Stella et al. 2007).

The nature or severity of particular disabilities necessitates specialized skills and teacher education. Secondary science teachers must receive opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward special education students, along with developing adequate knowledge and teaching skills necessary to address students' special needs (Biddle 2006).

Kimani (2006) stresses the importance of inclusion of specialist skills such as Braille and sign language on training courses of teachers and administrators, and not only inclusive education principles. He claims that children who are hearing impaired should not be included in the regular classes unless teachers are conversant with sign language.

The knowledge about children with special needs gained through formal studies during pre- and in-service training is considered an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of an inclusive policy (Avramidis & Norwich 2002).

Anderson (2004) recommends departments of teacher education to emphasize the importance of classroom culture in improving teacher effectiveness by offering the courses, workshops and seminars which help teachers understand the benefits of appropriate classroom cultures as well as how to establish such cultures. He emphasizes that teacher training should be planned in such a way that increases teacher effectiveness. According to him it is also important that learning by teachers do not end by graduating the formal learning. Learning should continue during their work as teachers. So, teachers learn before and after pre-service training. Policy-makers and educational planners must ensure that teachers have the resources they need to create effective and functional classroom. Clear policies must be established for classroom organization. And in order to help school administrations and teachers to understand and properly implement these policies, a series of in-service training sessions should be designed and implemented. According to him communication skills should be one of the primary criteria for selecting teachers and assessment of communication skills should be a regular part of ongoing teacher evaluation. Further, he claims that it will be beneficial to have a strong link between departments of teacher education, curriculum development centres and national and state agencies. The changes are always needed. In order changes to happen and to cause the improving of the situation, the participants should understand why the change is needed. They should have the knowledge and besides, think analytically. Pre-service training of the teachers should provide teachers with knowledge and with the skills of analytical thinking and reflecting. Teachers should continually reflect on their practices and make changes if needed to improve practices. This willingness to change is very important in teaching in inclusive setting, due to a great diversity of needs in one classroom. Teachers are often reluctant to change because of a lack of awareness that a change is needed, a lack of knowledge, particularly procedural

knowledge, concerning how to change and the belief that the changes will make any difference to them or to their students.

Thus, both pre-service and in-service education is very important for teachers' professional development. It is very important, that the knowledge and skills offered to teachers should be based on knowledge acquired by research. Action research should be one of the most important in-service teacher development which is a natural way of acting and researching at the same time (Dick 2002).

In summary, the requirements of an inclusive school require reforms of pre-service and in-service teacher training courses.

This chapter reviewed the literature related to attitudes, inclusion and some of the closely related factors. Next chapter will concern itself with methodology exploited in the investigation of teachers' attitudes and the factors influencing their attitudes.

3. CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study concerns itself with investigation of the attitudes of teachers in Tbilisi towards the inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools depending on experience or non-experience in teaching in inclusive settings. This chapter will report the design, population, sample and sampling procedure, the instruments of the study, procedure of data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity issues and research ethics.

3.2 Research design/strategy

This study used the quantitative approach and the survey research design as a relevant strategy for measuring attitudes of a large population. A survey is a method of data collection using questionnaires or interviews to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized. This type of research has yielded much valuable knowledge about opinions, attitudes, and practices. This knowledge has helped shape educational policy and initiatives to improve existing conditions (Gall et al. 2007).

Befring (2004) describes the Survey methodology as particularly useful for studying social facts, opinions and attitudes in large populations.

Therefore, this strategy is considered relevant for this study because the focus in this study is to measure the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools.

As mentioned above the term *survey* describes research that involves the administration of questionnaires or interviews (Gall et al. 2007). This study employed questionnaire as a main method and the qualitative approach and the interview as a subsidiary method to supplement the questionnaire data. There is a growing consensus among researchers that qualitative and quantitative research can

complement each other. This approach has come to be known as *mixed-methods research* (Gall et al. 2007). Various mixed-methods designs have been used by educational researchers.

Thus, this study employed a quantitative method as a main method and qualitative method as a subsidiary method to discover additional constructs that are relevant to the study goals (Gall et al. 2007).

3.3 Population, sample and sampling procedure

3.3.1 Description of the study area

The survey involved the public schools in Tbilisi, including as project /inclusive schools so other ordinary schools without experience in inclusive education.

Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample from two subgroups of the population. Stratified sampling provides one way to obtain a representative sample.

The population is divided into segments, or strata. Individuals are selected from each stratum and thus it is guaranteed that each segment of the population is represented in the sample. A random sample is then selected from each segment (Bordens & Abbott 2005).

3.3.2 Description of the population

Target population in a quantitative research includes all members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objects to which researcher wants to generalize the results of the research (Gall et al. 2007).

The population in this study is all teachers in Tbilisi. From those some teachers have experience in teaching in schools with inclusive education and others do not have such experience. The number of teachers was too large to study and the study thus had to select a representative sample from the population.

3.3.3 Description of the sample

A sample is obtained by collecting information about only some members of the population. The goal of sampling is to obtain a sample that properly mirrors the population it is designed to represent. A representative sample is one in which the profile of the sample is the same as that of the population (De Vaus 2002).

The schools without experience of inclusive education were randomly sampled from all schools in Tbilisi, while the schools with experience were sampled within the all project schools.

The sample of this study was divided into strata or subgroups: the first group was with experience in inclusive education and the second group- without such experience. Then, random samples were drawn from those smaller segments. All the teachers work in schools in Tbilisi.

The teachers with experience in inclusive education work in schools which are selected as participating pilot schools in the project on introducing inclusive education in 10 schools in Tbilisi⁵. The teachers have experience in teaching at schools in which inclusive education has been introduced. At these schools teachers have received more information about the philosophy and principles of inclusion. This was the only difference between these teachers and the teachers from the schools without experience in inclusive education by the time of investigation. The teachers from project schools had not received any training within the project by that time. Only some of the teachers in both groups had attended some workshops or trainings arranged by NGO-s on the principles of inclusive education, but generally, they have not received specialisation in special needs education.

The second sub-group of the teachers work in ordinary schools in Tbilisi where inclusive education has not been introduced. A majority of schools in Georgia has no experience in inclusion. Although, some of the teachers have a short-time training in

⁵ See chapter 1 for details

the principles of inclusive education, they are high likely to have limited working experience of implemented inclusive programmes.

In order to obtain information regarding the situation in Georgia concerning the implementation and future plans on inclusive education seen with the eyes of inclusive education promoters, the study sampled two representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science for an interview. The convenient purposeful sampling method was used in order to obtain rich information about the issue. I assumed they were information rich as they were having responsibilities for inclusive education in Georgia.

Table 1 shows the summary of the sample for this study.

Table 1: Sampling summary

Teachers with experience in inclusive education	200
Teachers without experience in inclusive education	100
Inclusive education promoters	2

3.3.4 Procedure of sampling

Proper sampling is a crucial aspect of the survey design. Without proper sampling the results can not be generalized to the target population. A representative sample closely matches the characteristics of the population. Probability sampling method was employed in this study meaning that each individual in the population had a known probability of being selected.

Random sampling is at the heart of sampling techniques. In random sampling, every member of the population has an equal chance of appearing in your sample (Bordens and Abbott 2005).

A list of schools with and without inclusive education practices was available in the Ministry of Education and Science. The study sampled 300 teachers whereas 200 teachers were from schools with inclusive educational practices, and 100 teachers

were from schools without such practices. A stratified random sampling was used to study the two categories of the teachers. A stratified random sample involves a sample selected so that certain subgroups in the population are adequately represented in the sample (Gall et al. 2007).

A non-proportional stratified random sampling was used which differs from the proportional stratified random sampling in the sense that the proportion of each subgroup in the sample is the same as their proportion in the population (Gall et al. 2007). This study used a non-proportional stratified random sampling as the teachers with experience in inclusive education represent a much smaller subgroup than the teachers without such experiences. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, there are very few schools in Tbilisi in which inclusive education has been introduced, so if using a proportional stratified random sampling, the study would select fewer teachers with, and more teachers without experience. According to Gall et al. (2007) the non-proportional stratified random sampling is quite acceptable, as long as we make generalizations only about the findings for teachers of each background.

3.3.5 Instruments

The standardized, high structure of the questionnaire is compatible with quantitative methods (Gall et al. 2007).

Being a survey, the study used a questionnaire as a main instrument. The questionnaire is widely used in survey research, but other techniques can also be used (De Vaus 2002).

Questionnaires have both advantages and disadvantages over other methods: the cost of sampling respondents over a wide geographical area is lower, and the time required to collect the data typically is much less. However, questionnaires cannot probe deeply into respondents' beliefs, attitudes and other experience. And also, once the questionnaire has been distributed it is not possible to modify the items, even if they are unclear to some respondents (Gall et al. 2007).

According to Gall et al. (2007) a questionnaire that measures attitudes generally must be constructed as an attitude scale and must use a substantial number of items in order to obtain a reliable assessment of an individual's attitude. When planning to collect information about attitudes, a researcher should first do a search of the research literature to determine whether a scale suitable for the purposes of the study already has been constructed. Likert scales, which typically ask for the extent of agreement with the attitude items are a common type of attitude scale.

The study used a part of an already constructed close-ended questionnaire adapted from a Likert-style questionnaire originally developed by Barbara Larrivee (Larrivee and Cook 1979) using the method of summated ratings. The scale was used to investigate the effect of selected institutional variables on the attitude of the regular classroom teacher toward mainstreaming (ATMS) special-needs children in New England. The questionnaire was selected as an instrument because of its documented reliability and validity in measuring attitudes toward children with disabilities (Hayes & Gunn 1988., Leyser et al. 1988, Engh 2003, Kimani 2006, Muleya 2006). The questionnaire used in this study is closer to that of Kimani's (2006) version which he used in investigating the Kenyan teachers attitudes toward inclusion. As Georgia is different both from New England and Kenya, adaptations were made to the questionnaire in order to adjust it to the Georgian context. The questionnaire was first translated into Georgian by the researcher and reviewed by four Georgian native speakers and experts in the field, after what some modifications were made in order to make the instrument better understandable for Georgian teachers. Afterwards, the instrument was pilot tested with a group of 30 teachers to ensure any ambiguities prior to formal administration. Teachers participated in the pilot study generally found the language of the questionnaire clear and only minor modifications were made (Appendix 1 A, 1B).

The questionnaire consists of close-ended items using a 5-point rating scale. They provide a limited number of specific response alternatives (Bordens & Abbot 2005). Therefore, an open-ended item was provided at the end of the questionnaire in order to give the participants possibility to express the opinions which were not covered by

the questionnaire close-ended items. Such information may be more complete and accurate than the information obtained with a restricted item (Bordens & Abbott 2005).

As mentioned, the questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part represents demographic variables of the respondents and the characteristics of the schools in which they teach; the second part represents the items on teachers' opinions about inclusion of children with special needs.

The questionnaire used the three components of attitudes manifested in cognitive, affective and behavioural domains.

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement using a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree. As mentioned above, the questionnaire was close-ended, but at the end of the questionnaire the open-ended item was provided to give the teachers opportunity to give the information which was not covered in the closed-ended questionnaire.

Formal or structured interview guides were constructed for two inclusive education specialists at the Ministry of Education and Science focusing on the general situation and tendencies regarding inclusive education in Georgia (Appendix 2).

3.3.6 Pilot-testing of the instrument

The questionnaire was translated into Georgian by the researcher (Appendix 1A) and revised by some professionals in the field. After discussion some conceptual/linguistic changes were made. In order to eliminate ambiguous items, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 teachers and their recommendations were taken into consideration in adaptation of the questionnaire to a Georgian context. Due to the fact that inclusive education is quite a new phenomenon in Georgia, some terms in the questionnaire were modified in order to improve the language and to avoid the eventual misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

The interview guide was also pilot-tested with one specialist in the field. No changes were necessary to make as all the questions seemed clear and to the point.

3.4 Procedure of data collection

Prior to the study I got permission and an excellent possibility to join the above mentioned project on introducing inclusive education in 10 schools in Tbilisi which gave me the opportunity to see the reality in Georgia and to collect the empirical data. Permission for conducting the study was sought and received from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and from the persons in charge of the project from Norway. The representative from the Ministry of Education and Science, who also agreed to be my local advisor, also assisted me to contact the schools and obtain the permission of conducting the study.

The questionnaire was administrated with permission and assistance of my Georgian advisor from the Ministry of Education and Science. The form of group administration of the questionnaires was used. As the population of the study was big, pre-contacting the respondents was impossible. Therefore, the introductory page was attached to the questionnaire that described briefly the purpose of the study and the philosophy of inclusive education.

In addition to the collecting an empirical data, joining the project also gave me a possibility to interview inclusive education specialists in Georgia. The interview respondents were sampled on a convenience and purposeful base as they were supposed to be information rich. They agreed to answer the interview questions. Due to the limited time, the interview guides were given to respondents and they answered it as a questionnaire.

By the time of data collection, the schools actually were in the process of examination of the principals. After the assessment new principals were assigned to many schools. Therefore, pre-contacting of school principals which I intended to do was not possible.

All the questionnaires were returned through my Georgian advisor.

3.5 Procedure of data analysis

The questionnaire data analysis was analysed by using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 14.) with assistance of my Norwegian advisor.

The quantitative analysis of survey data requires that answers to questions are converted into numbers. Many variables also require that answers be classified into categories. The process of converting answers to numbers and classifying answers is called coding (De Vaus 2002). Hence, the first step of the SPSS data analysis was to code the data and produce a codebook.

In order to eliminate coding errors, the location of the codes was checked and incorrect codes were corrected because it is important as coding errors can create serious problems during data analysis (De Vaus 2002).

Some codes were reversed in order to have all variables coded in the same direction (De Vaus, 2002). Also, some new variables were created.

As it was not possible to get people to answer the same questions on two occasions, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to check the reliability of the scale. Alpha should be at least 0.7 before we can say that the scale is reliable (De Vaus, 2002). The items which had low reliability coefficient were dropped. The excluded items were analysed separately. Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire used in the study was 0.8, indicating a high reliability of the scale (Appendix 4).

A frequency analysis was done for all the questionnaire items, which produced an output with frequencies, percentages, valid percent and cumulative percent.

The data was further analysed by using a t-test, univariate analysis of variance, multiple comparisons and Pearson correlation to answer the research questions. T-test was also used to compare general attitudes of teachers in relation to gender, age,

teaching experience, teachers' education, class size and experience in teaching children with special needs.

The interview data was used to answer the question four about the view of inclusive education promoters concerning the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia. The interview data was transcribed and analysed qualitatively.

3.6 Reliability and validity

The validity of a questionnaire may be affected by a variety of factors. For example, how you define the behaviour of attitude you are measuring can affect validity.

Validity also can be affected by the methods used to gather your data. Generally, methodological flaws, poor conceptualization, and unclear questions can all contribute to lowered levels of validity (Bordens & Abbott 2005).

As indicated earlier, the questionnaire was adopted from a Likert scale questionnaire developed by Barbara Larrivee (1979). Further, the questionnaire was used by other researchers and among them by Kimani (2006) in investigation of attitudes of teachers in Kenya. I had both the original version and the version adapted by Kimani at hand and used them when adapting it to a Georgian context. The questionnaire had been considered as valid and reliable in other contexts.

The questionnaire was revised by some professionals. Then it was pilot-tested with 30 teachers. Some adjustments were required and done after pilot-testing.

It is also indicated earlier that this was a closed-ended questionnaire but at the end it was an open-ended item in order to give the teachers option to give comments on the issues which were not covered by the close-ended items or they could extend their opinions.

A valid measure is one which measures what it is intended to measure. In fact, it is not the measure that is valid or invalid but the use to which the measure is put. The validity of a measure then depends on how we have defined the concept it is designed to measure (De Vaus 2002).

In order to strengthen the validity, the definition of inclusion was provided in the introductory page of the questionnaire. The length of the questionnaire appeared to be appropriate; the items were also clear and appropriate for my sample.

Content validity emphasises the extent to which the indicators measure the different aspects of the concept. The questionnaire measured three components of attitude, i.e affective, cognitive and behavioural.

As stated earlier, Cronbach's Alpha was used as the most appropriate reliability measure to use for Likert scale to check the internal consistency.

Using the SPSS enhanced the accuracy in the data analysis.

The using of standardized questionnaire used by other researchers and considered to be valid and reliable could also to some degree increase validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

To check the quality of the interview guides, they also were revised and pilot-tested prior to the administration.

Although much effort was made by the researcher there are also some factors that could threaten the validity and reliability. Due to the limited time and resources the researcher could not meet the respondents and could not deliver the questionnaires personally. The teachers might have some questions to the researcher. Also, due to the process of appointing new school principals, it was not possible to meet them either.

The fact that the teachers received the questionnaires through the representatives of the Ministry of Education could influence their answers. They may think that they should give answers to please them.

The close-ended scale may have limited the respondents who might want to give more information and only one open-ended item was too limited to provide the information.

Due to the fact that inclusion is a new phenomenon in Georgia, some teachers may think that inclusion is a correct and accepted model and they should favour it. As Georgia is a formal totalitarian country, people generally and also teachers are used to get instruction from higher levels and accept them without discussing its effectiveness.

3.7 Research ethics

According to Kitchener (2000, in Gall, Gall & Borg 2007) ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with questions of how people ought to act toward each other, which pronounces judgments of value about actions and develops rules to guide ethical choices.

Every researcher thus needs to consider carefully –before, during, and after the conduct of a research study-the ethical concerns that can affect their research participants (Gall, et al. 2007).

Ethics is important in all fields and especially in the field where participants are Human beings. And even more in the context where very often the study concerns the most vulnerable people.

Most professional codes of ethics stress the importance of five ethical responsibilities towards survey participants: voluntary participation, informed consent, no harm, confidentiality and privacy (De Vaus 2002). The study has taken these responsibilities seriously.

Although the survey did not cover sensitive issues, the following ethical principles were followed: permission of conducting the study was sought and received from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia; the respondents were informed that participation was voluntary; the purpose and the context of the study was also explained to them. The participants were informed that the investigation would be used for a Master Thesis and would also be an integrated part of the project.

To protect the confidentiality of the respondents they were not required to state their names on the questionnaires.

The interview respondents were also asked whether they were willing to answer the questions.

In reporting study findings the sufficient information will be provided to the public so that the results will not be misleading (De Vaus 2002).

4. CHAPTER FOUR: Data presentation and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and the findings of the study starting with the presentation of demographic information of the respondents and the characteristics of the schools in which they work, followed with the presentation of data on teachers' opinions about inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools.

The purpose of the study is to examine the opinions/attitudes of teachers in embarking of the inclusion of students with special needs into regular schools in Georgia. The stratified random sampling strategy was used to select two types/categories of schools in Tbilisi: the first category was the schools with practices in inclusive education within the 10 project schools and the second one was the schools in which introducing of inclusive education has not yet been introduced. The teachers gave their opinions through the questionnaire.

In order to answer the research questions, the questionnaire data was analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v. 14.0). Further, the analysis of the teachers' comments is given.

The chapter also presents a bi-variate data analysis using T-test for independent samples and the One-way ANOVA test in order to find out if there was any statistical significant difference in the opinions of teachers with different kind and levels of training and teaching experience, class level they teach and the number of the pupils in the school, gender, age of the teachers etc.

As indicated earlier, interview approach was used as a subsidiary method to supplement the questionnaire data. The interview data were transcribed and analysed qualitatively.

4.2 Teacher and school-related information

As mentioned above, the study was carried out in two types of schools. The first type was the schools with the experience of inclusive education and the second was the schools without such experience. Table 2 shows the frequencies and the percentages of the teachers from those schools.

Table 2: School type with and without inclusive education

Valid	Frequency	Percent
1 without	102	34,2
2 with	196	65,8
3 Total	298	100,0

According to the Table 2, there were one hundred and two teachers (34, 2%) from schools without experience and one hundred and ninety six teachers (65, 8%) were from schools with experience in inclusive education participating in this study.

Table 3 Teachers gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
1 female	284	96,6
2 male	10	3,4
3 Total	294	100
Missing System	4	1,3
Total	298	100

As displayed in Table 2, female teachers outnumbered male teachers: there were two hundred and eighty four female teachers (96, 6 %) and ten male teachers (3, 4 %) participating in this study. Four teachers (1, 3%) did not indicate their gender (Table 3).

Teachers' age. From 281 respondents, the range of age is from 20 to 70 years, with a mean of 43, 82 and standard deviation of 11,651(Figure 1)

Figure 1 Teachers' age

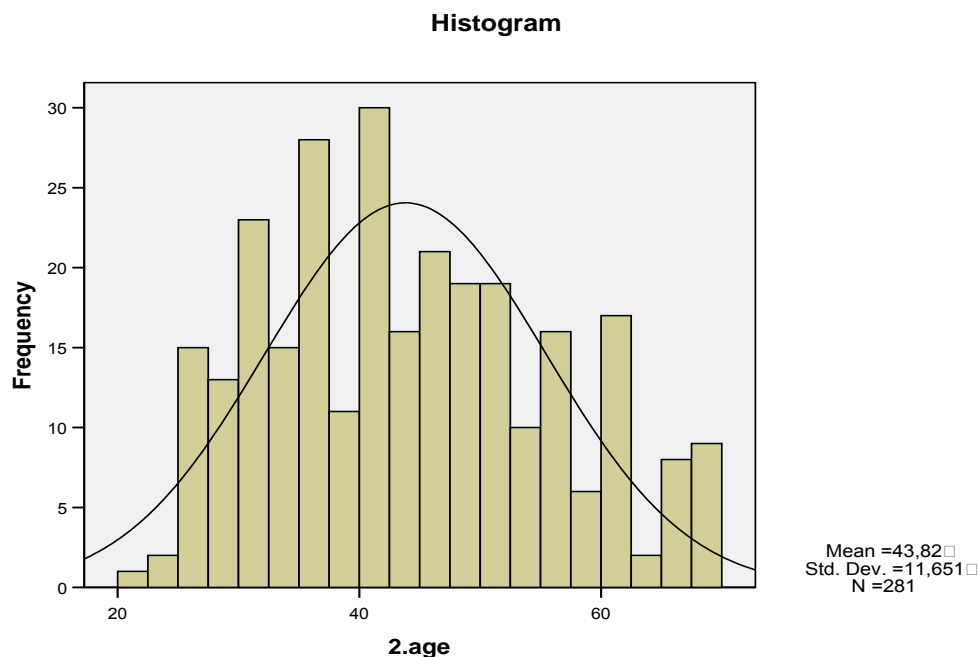


Table 4 Teaching experience

Teaching experience	Frequency	Percent
1 <10 years	93	31,2
2 10-20 years	120	40,3
3 >20 years	83	27,9
Total	296	99,3
Missing System	2	,7
Total	298	100

Among 298 teachers one hundred and twenty teachers (40,3%) had taught for a period of between 10-20 years, ninety three teachers (31,2 %) had taught for less than 10 years and eighty three teachers (27,9%) had taught more than 20 years. This indicates that a large number of respondents, namely two hundred and three teachers had a teaching experience of more than 10 years but not more than 20 years.(Table 4).

Table 5 Education/Training of the teachers

Education	Frequency	Percent
1 None at all	91	30,5
2 Short	91	30,5
3 Diploma	83	27,9
4 Degree	1	,3
5 Short +diploma	13	4,4
6 Diploma +degree	2	,7
Total	281	94,3
Missing System	17	5,7
Total	298	100,0

On the question whether the teachers had any kind of education in special needs or inclusive education, an unexpected high number of the teachers answered that they had short education (ninety one) and diploma (eighty three) in Special needs or Inclusive education. Thirteen teachers answered that they have both short education and diploma (Table 5). The results can be explained due to misinterpreting the term ‘diploma’ by the participants. Often, in Georgia, the paper (certificate) that is given to the participants of a short-time seminar/workshop or training is named as diploma. This can be the reason that many teachers answered that they have both short education and diploma. I think that the teachers misunderstood what the researcher referred by ‘diploma’. Since the type of teacher education referred by the teachers seems misleading, the specific conclusions about the relation between teachers’ education level and their attitudes cannot be drawn. The relationship between the teachers’ education and their attitudes can be studied in future investigations.

It should be mentioned that when this research was done, the teachers had not yet received any kind of training within the current project, the workshops were planned to be arranged in March/April 2008, when according to the plan the multidisciplinary group trained within the project would start training of the teachers in the project schools.

Table 6 Average number of learners in the schools

Number of pupils in school	Frequency	Percent
1 <500	7	2,3
2 501-1000	93	31,2
3 >1000	193	64,8
Total	293	100,0
Missing system	5	1,7
Total	298	100,0

In most schools the respondents were teaching at, the number of the students was over one thousand (64, 8%). Ninety three teachers taught in schools with between five hundred and one thousand students (31, 2%) and only seven teachers (2, 3%) taught in schools with the population of less than five hundred. This can indicate the fact that most schools in Tbilisi have a high student population (Table 6).

Table 7 Average number of learners in the classes

Number of pupils per class	Frequency	Percent
1 <20	11	3,7
2 21-35	251	84,2
3 35-45	25	8,4
Total	287	96,3
Missing system	11	3,7
Total	298	100,0

Most teachers (two hundred and one) teach in classes with twenty one to thirty five students (84, 2%). Twenty five teachers (8, 4%) are teaching in a class with thirty five to forty five students. The results indicate that most classes in Tbilisi-schools have twenty one to thirty five students (Table 7).

Table 8 Categories of children with special needs

Category	Frequency	Percent
Visually impaired	30	10,1
Physically Handicapped	86	28,9
Emotional and behavioural problems	72	24,2
Learning disabled	72	24,2
Mentally challenged	54	18,1
Hearing impaired	16	5,4
Gifted and talented	54	18,1

The highest category of children with special needs was the physically challenged pupils (28, 9%). Children with emotional and behavioural problems and learning disabilities come next (24, 2% for both). Mentally challenged and gifted and talented students were identified by fifty four teachers (18. 1 %). Visually impaired and hearing impaired students were identified by respectively thirty and sixteen teachers (Table 8).

The results indicated that it was necessary to have a separate variable for the category of children with total visual or hearing loss, because the researcher considers susceptible that the children with a severe hearing or visual damage attend the ordinary schools in Georgia. To the best knowledge of the researcher these children are still attending special schools for deaf and blind.

The fact that several teachers had answered that there were no students with special needs in their schools or classrooms but, however, on the next question where they had to indicate which category children of special needs they had in their schools/classes, they had ticked some of the items, may be explained by confusion among the teachers in terms of the issues of special needs education. This inconsistency may be explained by the fact that in Georgian schools there always have been found students with learning difficulties, emotional disorders and also gifted students without identifying them as students with special needs.

Consequently, these students did not receive any individually adapted teaching⁶. Some of the teachers participating in the pilot testing of the questionnaire indicated that they were not aware that gifted and talented students also belong to the category of children with special needs. Hence, the results of this item can be regarded as questionable.

The next section presents data from a five-scale Likert type questionnaire measuring teachers' opinions as to whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed to concrete issues. Afterwards, the data was analysed statistically to make inference about teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools.

4.3 Teachers' opinions

As indicated earlier this study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers working in Tbilisi schools towards inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular schools?
2. Is there any difference in attitudes between the teachers in pilot/inclusive and other schools?
3. Which variables have an influence on teachers' attitudes?
4. What is the view of Inclusive education promoters about the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia?

The questionnaire data was analysed in order to answer the first three questions. The data obtained through the interviews with the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia answered the forth question.

The questionnaire consisted of items measuring the attitudes to several aspects: attitudes towards the general philosophy of inclusion, towards teaching strategies and

⁶ Explained in Chapter 1

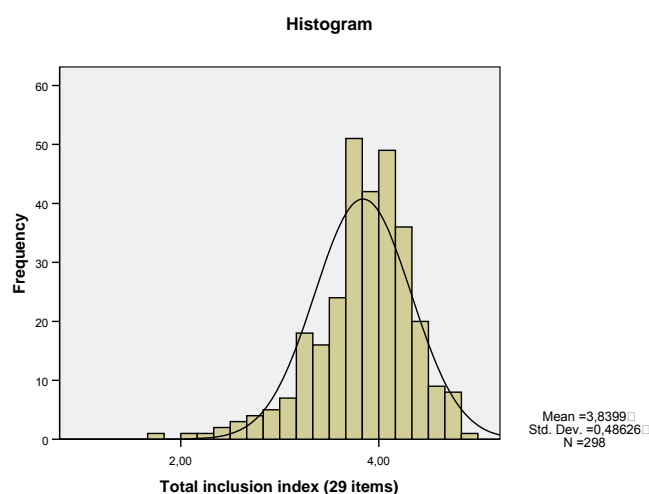
classroom management; moreover, it tried to measure attitudes regarding academic, emotional and social development of children in an inclusive classroom and challenges of inclusion. However, the items are not classified in this study according to these themes, but they are analysed separately. The results of the items which were considered significant relating to the research problem are presented separately (Appendix 3).

Initially, the questionnaire consisted of 34 items. In order to assess the internal consistency of the items, total alpha reliability analysis was done using the most commonly used Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This is the degree to which the items that make up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attribute (Pallant, Julie, 2007). The analysis reduced the instrument's items to twenty-nine as 5 items didn't meet reliability coefficient. The excluded items were analysed separately. The highest reliability coefficient alpha achieved for twenty-nine items showed the value 0.8, suggesting a high internal consistency (reliability) for the scale (Appendix 4). As stated in Chapter three, a reliability coefficient of above 0.7 is regarded normal.

Research question 1: What are the attitudes of teachers working in Tbilisi schools towards inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools?

The total inclusion index scale displays the results of the questions addressing attitudes. The total inclusion index showed an approximately normal distribution with the scores ranging from 1, 76 to 4, 86 in a scale of minimum score of 1 for extremely negative attitudes to a maximum score of 16 for the extremely positive attitude. The total index scale was performed by adding the score of 29 items and then divided by 20 to get an average scale. We got a mean 3, 83 which indicates that teachers overall attitudes are on the positive side.

Figure 2 Total inclusion index



Research question 2: Is there a difference in attitudes of the teachers related to the type of school (with experience and without experience)?

Independent sample t-test was used to compare the scores of two types of schools: with and without inclusion.

Table 9 Scores of two types of schools (with and without inclusion)

Type with/without		N	Mean	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total inclusion	1 without	102	80,06	,042
Index (29 items)	2 with	196	83,55	

The t-test results for independent samples indicated a significant difference in general attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools ($p=.04$) depending on the type of school. The teachers from schools with inclusive education were more positive than teachers from the schools without inclusive education. However, after controlling the results by Univariate Analysis of Variance, the difference between the groups disappeared. Accordingly, the results indicated that not a type of school (with and without inclusion) that made attitudes different, but whether the teachers teach in a school which have pupils with special needs or not. Hence, the effect of having pupils with special needs in school is significant for formation/change of attitudes (Sig. .01). Neither the effect of type nor

interaction term is significant. Those teachers who work at schools with children with special needs were more positive towards inclusion than those who do not have this category of pupils (Appendix 5).

Consequently, it was an experience with children with special needs that made differences, and not information and knowledge about inclusive education.

Research question 3: What are the factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusion?

Gender. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the attitude scores for males and females in order to explore whether males and females differ significantly in terms of their attitudes. Statistically significant difference ($p = .05$) was found in the mean attitudes scores for female and male teachers. Female teachers were more positive than male teachers.

Pupils with special needs in class. The table below displays the results of the t-test done in order to determine whether there was a difference in attitudes between the teachers who have the pupils with special needs in his/her class and those who do not have such category of pupils. The significance was high in differences in term of attitudes between those who had SNE pupils in class and who didn't have them (Table 10)

Table 10 Children with Special needs in class

SN class: Do you have children with SN in your class?		N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total inclusion index	1 yes	157	84,15	.010
	2 no	132	79,81	

T-test was also conducted to compare the attitude scores for those who teach in schools with pupils with special needs and whose schools do not have pupils with special needs in their schools. The difference was statistically significant (Sig. 00).

Those who have children with special needs in school are more positive than those who do not have them (Table 11)

Table 11 Group Statistics

School SN 5. Does the school you are currently teaching have children with SN		N	Mean	Sig.
Total Inclusion	1 yes	212	84,18	.001
index(29 items)	2 no	76	77,87	

Pupils' number. One-way ANOVA test displayed no significant difference between the three groups with < 20 pupils, with 20-35 pupils and 35-45 pupils however there was a tendency that those who had less than 20 pupils in class were extremely positive.

Class level. ANOVA test results displayed no significant difference between the groups divided according class level, but there is a tendency that teachers in lower classes are slightly negative.

Teaching experience. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the impact of teaching experience on attitudes. Subjects were divided into three groups according to teachers' teaching experience. (Group 1: <10 years; 2: 10-20 years; 3: >20 years). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level ($p = .01$) for the three groups.

Table 12 Teaching experience

	N	Mean	Sig.
1 <10 years	93	84,61	.016
2 10-20 years	120	83,29	
3 >20 years	83	78,83	
Total	296	82,46	

In order to find out where exactly difference occurred, the Post Hoc Test was done. The post-hoc comparisons using Scheffe test indicated the significant difference

between the attitudes of teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience and the teachers with less than 10 years teaching experience (Sig. .08).

Number of pupils in school. One-way ANOVA test results indicated that those with less than 500 pupils at school were more positive, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Teachers' age. In order to explore the strength of the relationship between age and attitudes, Pearson Correlation test was used. The Pearson correlation coefficient (-.18) was negative, indicating a negative correlation between age and attitudes. The older teachers are, the more negative are their attitudes (Significance .002). There is a tendency, that older teachers were more negative towards inclusion than younger teachers.

Education in special needs or inclusive education. The results of Oneway ANOVA test results indicated that there was a significant difference between the teachers in relation of their education in Special needs or inclusive education (Sig. .01). Multiple Comparisons used Scheffe and indicated that there is a significant difference between teachers with short education and diploma. According to the data, the difference in attitudes is significant between those teachers who have diploma and those with only short time training in special needs or Inclusive education. However, regarding the education, as explained earlier, there is an obvious misunderstanding by the teachers what diploma was referred to by the researcher. Besides the question on education in 'special needs' or 'inclusive education' was combined in one variable and the results indicated that it would be better to separate them to get the precise results. Therefore, the results of the Oneway ANOVA test on the relationship of teacher education and attitudes can be misleading.

On the item whether the teachers felt that regular teachers need training to teach in an inclusive setting, 48,1% of the teachers agreed with the statement; 24,7% strongly agreed and only 1,0% strongly disagreed to the statement.

T-test was used to analyse the teachers' attitudes in relation to each category of disability. The only significant difference was found in relation to hearing impairment. Teachers who had pupils with hearing impairment, were more positive of including children with special needs than those without having pupils with hearing impaired (Table 13)

Table 13 Hearing impaired children

	Hearing impaired	N	Mean
Total inclusion index	0	246	82,03
	1	16	87,69

61, 8% of the teachers agreed that being in regular classroom would promote the academic growth of the child with Special Needs. Only 7, 0 % disagreed with this statement.

By means of t-test the relationship between the attitudes of teachers from respectively to types of schools (with and without) as per the items was examined. The results which were considered interesting are displayed in Appendix 6.

The analyses of items excluded due to the low internal consistency

After testing the reliability coefficient and internal consistency the alpha value of following items were too low. Therefore, they were analysed separately.

Regular-classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach children with special needs.

Table 14 Teachers' training is sufficient

	Frequency	Percent
1 Strongly agree	24	8,1%
2 Agree	83	27,9%
3 Uncertain	94	31,5%
4 Disagree	60	20,1%
5 Strongly disagree	18	6,0%
Total	279	93,6%

Missing System	19	6,4%
Total	298	100,0%

Most of the respondents (27, 9 %) agreed that regular-classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach children with special needs, 20, 1 % thought contrary.

Children with special need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it.

Table 15 Children need to be told exactly what to do

	Frequency	Percent
1 Strongly agree	65	21,8%
2 Agree	192	64,4%
3 Uncertain	27	9,1%
4 Strongly disagree	8	2,7%
5 Disagree	2	,7%
Total	294	98,7%
Missing System	4	1,3%
Total	298	100,0%

Most of the respondents (64, 4 %) agreed that children with special needs needed to be told exactly what to do and how to do it. Only 2, 7 % of teachers strongly disagreed.

Parents of a child with special needs present no greater problem for a classroom teacher than those of a normal child.

Table 16 Parents

	Frequency	Percent
1 Strongly agree	25	8,4%
2 Agree	56	18,8%
3 Uncertain	96	32,2%
4 Strongly disagree	96	32,2%
5 Disagree	11	3,7%
Total	284	95,3%
Missing System	14	4,7%
Total	298	100,0%

18,8 % of the teachers thought that parents of a child with special needs present greater problem for a classroom teacher than those of a 'normal' child, 32, 2 % strongly disagreed to the statement.

The society in Tbilisi is fully sensitized on the principles of inclusive education.

Table 17. The sensitization of the society in Tbilisi

	Frequency	Percent
1 Strongly agree	21	7,0%
2 Disagree	45	15,1%
3 Uncertain	90	30,2%
4 Strongly disagree	121	40,6%
5 Disagree	17	5,7%
Total	294	98,7%
Missing System	4	1,3%
Total	298	100,0%

Most respondents (40, 6 %) strongly disagreed to the statement. 15, 1% agreed with the item.

Regular schools in Tbilisi are adequately equipped to accommodate children with special needs.

Table 18 Schools' equipment

	Frequency	Percent
1 Strongly agree	8	2,7%
2 Agree	45	15,1%
3 Uncertain	61	20,5%
4 Strongly disagree	126	42,3%
5 Disagree	46	15,4%
Total	286	96,0%
Missing System	12	4,0%
Total	298	100,0%

Most respondents (42, 3%) felt that regular schools in Tbilisi are not adequately equipped to accommodate children with special needs. Only 15, 1 % agreed to the statement.

The items which were considered to be important findings were analysed and displayed separately. As indicated earlier, some of other researchers who have used the same standardized questionnaire in their research have divided the questionnaire items into the themes (Kimani 2006; Muleya 2006). This study does not divide them into the themes, but displays the frequencies and percentages of the items that displayed the significant results. As there was not difference in teachers' attitudes as per type of school, this items are also analysed for all teachers regardless of the type of schools they were teaching (Appendix 6).

4.3 The analysis of the teachers' comments

At the end of the questionnaire items, there was an open-ended free response questionnaire item where the respondents had the opportunity to make comments about the inclusive education. However, many of the teachers made also comments on some questionnaire items right after the items.

According to the comments, most of the teachers felt that the possibility to function in regular classroom setting should be given to the pupils depending on their 'condition', 'disability' or 'illness'⁷. One of the teachers meant that only pupils who possess the elementary skills should be included into regular class.

One of the teachers meant that although the children with special needs do not make confusion in the teaching and learning procedures, however attendance would not be interesting for them. Another teacher felt that it depended on the kind of disability whether they make confusion in the learning and teaching procedures or not. As example, they mentioned an autistic child who usually makes confusion and interrupts a lesson.

⁷ In quotes the words used by the teachers are stated. My translation

Another teacher felt that the pupils who are not capable to control themselves should not be 'accepted' to the school.

The comments on the item relating to the abolishing of special schools and thus including all children in the regular schools indicated that teachers meant that it depends on the disability. One of the teachers said that it depends on the 'illness'. Again one teacher meant that children with all kind of disability except mental retardation 'should have the right' to study in regular schools. Another teacher considered that it would not be beneficial in case of visually impaired and 'psychically unstable'/ children who are 'out of balance'.

Teachers comments on the following item 'Regular teachers (who do not have special education) possess a great deal of the expertise necessary to work with special needs student', were that both the pupils and teachers require help from psychologists. One teacher felt that in case of teachers retraining it would be possible.

The teachers underscored that they themselves and many other teachers do not have any training in special needs or inclusive education.

According to the teachers, the behaviour of the children with special needs in the class depends on their 'illness' or 'condition'.

Teachers felt that the inclusion of children with special needs can be beneficial for regular students, and according to one teacher inclusion awakes a feeling of friendship and support. Another teacher has experienced and considered as an advantage that regular children acquired a feeling of 'pity' and the importance of help.

Controversial feelings were expressed by two different teachers regarding the negative influence of inclusion on the children's with special needs emotional development. One teacher indicated that it would influence negatively as the children grow up. Another teacher said that if children are psychologically prepared for inclusion, it would not have a negative impact.

One of the teachers felt that parents also needed training because the parents might disfavour inclusion more than children.

The infrastructure and attitudes were mentioned as obstacles that needed to be solved if inclusion is to be successful. Further, it was indicated that competence, skills and attitudes of the teachers are crucial. Teachers had controversial feelings for and against inclusion. One teacher who was against inclusion called for discussion in order to listen to the supporters and the opponents of the philosophy of inclusion and to try to answer the up to now unanswered questions.

Most of the comments indicated that teachers favour inclusion, but still teachers felt that preparation for inclusion was needed. According to the teachers the type of disability plays an important role in ‘determining whether a child should be included or not’.

One teacher felt that even though the philosophy of inclusion sounded well, due to the situation in today’s schools, special schools were preferable. She/he mentioned that the children were ‘aggressive’ and ‘less lovely and supportive’.

As indicated earlier, infrastructure and environment was mentioned as barriers to inclusion in schools in Georgia and the teachers meant that therefore children with hard conditions should study in special schools.

4.4 Interview analysis

Interview was used to address the fourth research question: What is the view of Inclusive education promoters from the Ministry of Education about implementing inclusive education in Georgia?

This study used interview as a supplementary method in order to receive the information from stakeholders to make a clear picture concerning the implementation of inclusive education in Georgia. The interview guides were presented to the Inclusive education specialists at the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and asked to fill in.

According to respondent 1, the schools in Georgia are not yet adequately facilitated to meet the needs of inclusive setting. Both of the respondents consider the current project on Implementation of Inclusive education in General Educational Institutions for 10 schools in Tbilisi (2005) the most important step towards inclusive education. According to respondent 1, the Georgian government has also carried out training of the parents, teachers and principals in three large regions of Georgia. Besides, the government established several programmes to support inclusive education. The respondent mentioned a very interesting program started in 2007, according to which the students from the universities voluntarily supported teachers in special schools and helped children with social adaptation. But, at the same time, she felt that the legislation and lack of the national policy on inclusive education cause problems in making the process more structured. According to her, the limited number of trained teachers is also a problem. She added that after implementation of the Deinstitutionalization policy, one special institution was closed and some of them have being prepared to be closed. She meant that the principles of inclusive education have been included in teacher preparation programs. She indicated that the government' unstructured work, a need for more professionals and the funding are the reasons for the slow implementation of inclusive education. The cooperation between professionals (with focus on special and general educators) is poor. In spite of the fact that the law obliges the teachers to create small professional networks and also the schools should cooperate according to the law, the cooperation does not work.

Respondent 2 felt that Georgia is ready for implementing inclusive education, and that the promoters do their best inclusive education to be successful. Respondent 1 felt that inclusive education in Georgia should start step by step.

Both of the respondents mentioned a good cooperation /collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Respondent 1 also indicated the good cooperation with NGOs.

Respondent 1 felt that implementation of inclusive education is a complex, challenging but not impossible and the vector should be towards to the idea of inclusive education.

The next chapter discusses the findings of the study, implications for further research and suggests the recommendations based on the discussion of the findings of the study for further development of inclusive education in Georgia by eliminating the attitudinal barriers towards children with special needs.

5. Chapter Five: Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The study aimed to investigate Georgian teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools. The research questions the study addressed were presented in chapter four.

The characteristics of the schools and the teachers were also provided in chapter four. The categories of children with special needs addressed by the questionnaire employed in this study is provided in Table 8, chapter four.

One of the major theoretical issues in the study of attitudes is how attitudes are to be defined (Avramidis, et al. 2000). This study aimed to investigate the attitudes of the teachers, therefore the definition and nature of attitudes and inclusion is particularly discussed in chapter two. As indicated earlier, for the purposes of our study the definition of attitudes as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagle and Chaiken 1993) was adopted.

Initially, the overall attitude of regular teachers regardless their experience in inclusive education was measured. Thereafter, the study compared these attitudes in relation to 'experience' and 'no experience' in inclusive education in order to determine if there was a difference in attitudes in relation to experience and no experience in inclusive education.

In order to investigate the influence of personal and institutional variables in the formation of teachers' attitudes, the study examined the attitudes of the teachers in relation to gender, age, teaching experience, teachers' educational background, grade level taught, school and class size and their personal professional experience with children with special needs.

5.2 Discussion

The study revealed mixed results as the philosophy of inclusion was both rejected and accepted by teachers.

Research question 1: What are the attitudes of teachers working in Tbilisi schools towards inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools?

Generally, the teachers from both categories of schools (with and without inclusive education) appeared to be on the positive side with the overall concept of inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools (Chapter four, Figure 2).

In similar studies undertaken in different countries teachers have also demonstrated positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al. 2000; Avramidis & Norwich 2002; Elhoweis & Alsheik 2006).

Research question 2: Is there a difference in attitudes of the teachers in relation to the type of school (with experience and without experience in inclusive education)?

One of the research questions this study aimed to answer was to determine whether the attitudes differed according to the two types of schools. As explained earlier, the only difference between these two categories of schools by the time of the investigation was that the teachers from 'inclusive' schools had been introduced to the principles of inclusion. However, it is worth mentioning that even these schools have not had a long experience in inclusive education. The study attempted to find out a possible influence of information about the principles of inclusion on teachers' attitudes. However, no significant differences were detected related to this, which can indicate that the attitudes of these teachers, though they were familiar with the general principals of inclusive education do not differ from other teachers' attitudes and thus can be concluded that without in-service retraining of the teachers in the issues of special needs education the attitudes can not be changed. Teachers, first and foremost, need to be confident to manage working with children with special needs in order to be positively disposed.

The difference was significant in terms of the attitudes of the teachers in relation to the experience in having children with special needs in the school. Here should be mentioned that as explained in chapter three, by the time of the investigation the only distinction between the teachers from project/inclusive schools and those from other schools was that in 'inclusive' schools the teachers were more informed about the inclusive education. Moreover, the teachers from project schools were required to work with those children according to the principles of inclusive education. Other schools selected also have children with special needs integrated in schools, as children with for example learning disabilities and behaviour problems have always been found in regular schools in Georgia, but these children have not been identified as students with special needs and hence, they have not been offered an individually adapted teaching. The teachers in schools where inclusive education has not yet been introduced are not required to adapt curriculum or teaching methods to the individual needs of the students (Chapter 1). Therefore, it is important to arise awareness about the children with special needs. As Opdal and Wormnæs (2001) indicated, when these students are identified as having difficulties, the results may reflect a realisation by the teachers that these students need educational strategies that they feel they do not possess.

However, those teachers who had children with special needs at schools were more positive to inclusion. These findings are in consistence with the findings of other studies which indicated more positive attitudes in teachers with working experience with children (Romi & Leyser 2006; Opdal & Wormnaes 2001; Muleya 2006).

So, these results indicate that solely the information about the principles of inclusive education is not sufficient to form and/or change the teachers' attitudes, but the experience of having children with special needs in schools makes difference.

It's worth remembering that the questionnaire utilized in this survey was administered in summer 2007, and the then attitudes could have been changed/will be changed by the end of the project. As indicated earlier, the teachers in project schools

had not yet been trained within the project, but the training was planned in March-April 2008.

In order to elicit the effect of teachers' training on their attitudes, research should be done after teachers' training to see if their attitudes have changed.

According to the results, the previous experience with children with special needs had a positive effect on teachers' attitudes. This can be interpreted in the light of a vital importance of professional education and practical experience, as the factors having an influence on attitude formation and change. The findings of the survey demonstrating differences in responses between the teachers who had children with special needs in their schools and who do not have them indicated that experience of educating children with special needs results in positive attitudes. This is related to a study by Romi and Leyser (2006), undertaken in Israeli, which indicated that experience in working with children and youth with disabilities was associated with a more positive view about the benefits of inclusion and with fewer concerns about behaviour difficulties in inclusive classrooms. This finding also proves the explanation stated in theory chapter (two) that a classic social psychological finding is that multiple exposures to another person often create more positive attitudes toward that person (e.g., Saegert, S & Zajonc, 1973 in Albarracín 2005).

Research question 3: Which variables have an influence on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion?

The results of the study indicated a statistical difference in attitudes between the female and male teachers. The female teachers held more positive attitudes toward inclusion than their male colleagues. This agrees with several studies which indicated that female teachers are more tolerant for inclusion of children with special needs than male teachers (Romi & Leyser 2006; Stella et al. 2007; Avramidis et al. 2000; Muleya 2006; Alghazo & Gaad 2004).

A high significant difference was revealed between the teachers who had children with special needs in their classes/schools and who did not have them. To have

children with special needs in the schools and the classroom influenced teachers' attitudes towards positive disposition.

The tendency of being positive in attitude for the teachers who had less than 20 pupils in class, was also indicated. The same tendency was detected among the teachers who taught in lower classes. Although the significance was not statistically significant, the teachers in lower classes tended to be more positive to inclusion.

According to the results, the older teachers were more negative towards inclusion. This tendency can be partly explained by the fact that Georgia was a part of the former Soviet Union and older teachers had been educated and received their working practice in the Soviet period when people generally and children with disabilities as well were isolated from the society. The view that children with special needs are best served in special schools, is still firmly established among the teachers in Georgia. Inclusive education seems unreal for many of them. This finding is consistent with the nature of strong attitude provided in methodology chapter that the attitudes which last long become strong and strong attitudes are more resistant to change (Eagly & Chaiken 1993).

Regarding to the training of teachers, the teachers participating in this study felt that they needed retraining to succeed in implementation of inclusive education.

Teachers who taught children with hearing impairment were more positive to include children with hearing impairment in the class. Similar results were indicated by Opdal and Wormnaes (2001), assuming that exposure and experience with students with certain disabilities had an influence on teacher attitudes towards a positive disposition. They found that the teachers who had experience with students with physical disabilities, were most supportive to the idea of including students with the same disabilities.

One important aspect should be noted here. The teachers were asked whether they had children with special needs in their classes or schools. Many teachers answered 'no' on this question. Nevertheless, when they had to indicate which categories of

children they had in schools or in class, in case they had some, the same teachers indicated that they had children with certain categories of special needs. This denotes that teachers lack information regarding special needs. As explained earlier, children with certain kind of special needs, who were considered 'educable' have always been found in Georgian schools but they have not been identified as students with special needs. This led to the view that only children with severe disabilities who were considered as 'uneducable' before, belong to the category of special needs⁸.

With regard to influence of teachers' educational background on their attitudes, the researcher is irresolute to draw conclusions because of uncertain results (explained in chapter four). The relationship of teachers' educational background and their attitudes may be examined in future investigations.

The results of this study agree with the results of a qualitative study on attitudes undertaken within the same project (2007) on Introducing Inclusive Education in General Educational Institutions for 10 schools in Tbilisi (2005-2008, presented in chapter 1). In the analysis of the data the researchers indicated that although teachers from both types of school (with and without experience in inclusive education) discuss the positive nature of inclusive education and agree that inclusive education should be implemented, they are not sincere in their answers. The researchers concluded that their attitudes are more negative, than positive. Even the teachers' who work with children with special needs were extremely negative towards inclusion of these children and argued that such children should not be 'seen/visible' everywhere. The researchers indicated that the teachers have not been selected adequately.

The teachers' comments made on an open-ended item of the questionnaire employed in this study also provide interesting data for discussion. The attitudes towards disability are reflected in the terminology the teachers used. The words such as 'illness', 'psychically out of balance', 'deviant' etc. were frequently used by some of the teachers. One of the teachers stated explicitly that children with certain

⁸ See the description of Defectology in chapter 1

disabilities 'should have right to be included'⁹. This statement concerns me because the question arises whether the teachers feel that other children should be deprived the right to receive education together with their peers? So, even teachers say that they favour inclusion the opinions expressed are in disagreement with the principles of inclusion.

Teachers seemed not to be definite in their opinions. They favour inclusion, but with some reservations. The similar findings were found by Marshal J, Ralph, S, Palmer, S (2002) in their study indicating that although the attitude scores obtained appeared to be positive, on closer examination some of these positive feelings were couched in negative manners. The participants meant that all children should in principle be included, but the severity of the disability and extra training required needed to be taken into account. Romi and Leyser (2006), in the study of variables associated with attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs of Israeli pre-service teachers also concluded that despite the overall endorsement to the philosophy of integration and beliefs in the benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities, the participants also expressed uncertainty and concerns about the lack of instructional skills of general education inclusion teachers and the educators continued to support the option of special education placements for students with disabilities.

One teacher involved in this study commented that inclusive education is 'an urgent issue which is not to be solved by filling in this questionnaire'¹⁰. The teacher obviously wanted to invite other professionals in cooperation in order to find out the ways to solve this 'problem' as she named it.

The need of the training of the parents was also expressed by one teacher.

From the perspectives of the participants of the study the main obstacles to the inclusion is lack of training and resources and also the child's health-related conditions. These findings are supported by previous research.

⁹ My translation

¹⁰ My translation

As explained earlier, this study used interview as a subsidiary method in order to provide supplementary information about the situation in Georgia concerning implementation of inclusive education. Promoters' goodwill and belief is proved to be important. The respondents were inclusive education specialists at the Ministry of Education and Science.

One respondent claimed that Georgia is ready for implementing inclusive education and the stakeholders do their best to make it reality¹¹.

The above mentioned pilot project on introducing inclusive education in 10 schools was indicated by both of the respondents as the most important step towards implementing of inclusive education in Georgia.

One of the respondent mentioned that the lack of national policy on inclusive education is a barrier to implement inclusive education, as without legislation the process can not be structured.

A limited number of trained teachers and lack of facilities at schools was mentioned as a barrier to inclusive education by one of the respondents.

Both of the respondents saw the necessity and expressed the goodwill to implement inclusive education in Georgia. However, one respondent felt that Georgia was ready to implement inclusive education, while the other respondent indicated that inclusive education should be implemented step by step.

5.3 Conclusions

The general findings of this study in the light of the purpose of this study were that general attitudes of teachers in Tbilisi regular schools are on the positive side. However, the analysis of their comments revealed that still many teachers were for special settings and felt that children with behavioural problems and mentally challenged children cannot be served in ordinary classrooms.

¹¹ My translation

No significant difference was found between the attitudes of teachers related to working at schools with or without inclusive educational practices. Significant difference was found between the attitudes of teachers who work at schools with children with special needs and who do not have children with special needs in their classes. The teachers with experience were more positive, than those without.

According to the findings, the training of teachers in special needs education and practice in inclusive education are the important factors in the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion.

According to the findings, gender factor can have an influence on attitudes suggesting female teachers to be more positive towards inclusion. This finding is both consistent and contrary to the findings of some earlier studies.

High significant difference was found between the teachers who had students with special needs in their schools and who did not have these children in their schools. Those who have these children in the schools were more positive towards inclusion.

The teachers who had children with special needs in their classes also tended to be positive to inclusion.

To conclude, the main barriers to inclusive education in Georgia are the lack of policy guidelines on inclusive education, the lack of resources which brings about the lack of facilities at schools, inadequate pre- and in-service training of the teachers and the lack of literature about the issues related to special needs and inclusive education. The lack of knowledge again brings about the lack of confidence among teachers in handling the diversity in the classroom. The teachers expressed that they need help of psychologists in working with children with special needs. This is not surprising. However, according to the comments, it is uncertain of what kind of help do the teachers expect from the psychologists. This can indicate that the roles and the responsibilities of different professionals are not that clear for the teachers.

The wish expressed by one of the teachers to meet others and discuss the issues concerning inclusive education makes me feel that the teachers may feel that they

need more communication with others. As it was indicated earlier, lack of cooperation and teamwork seems to be one of the main challenges in educational system in Georgia.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The findings of the study must be reviewed in the light of several limitations. Initially, the respondents were informed that the investigation was connected to the pilot project carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in cooperation with Norway. This might have influenced the teachers' answers. This could also explain the high rate of returning the questionnaires as well. This tendency should be taken into consideration especially concerning post-totalitarian countries as Georgia.

Another limitation is that the researcher did not have the possibility to meet the teachers personally. Although a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and the brief characteristic of inclusion was presented in the questionnaire, this might not be sufficient.

The teachers were not provided with the explanation that although the study intended to study attitudes towards certain categories of special needs, the term 'special needs' referred to all children at any kind of risk to be excluded from the majority of children. The analysis of the data indicated the necessity of explaining the teachers whom the researcher referred to when asking about the children with special needs.

Conclusion about the influence of teachers' level of education on their attitudes could not be drawn which indicates that the participants should be provided with explanation what the questionnaire meant with several education levels.

Nevertheless, recognising these limitations, the results from this investigation offer several important implications for further research and also recommendations for policy-makers.

5.4 Ideas for further research

The study compared the attitudes of teachers in relation to ‘experience’ and ‘no experience’ in inclusive education. It was hypothesized that the attitudes of the teachers from to types of schools would differ. However, the results indicated no statistical difference in attitudes. As this study was carried out when the teachers had not yet been trained within the project, therefore, I suggest that a survey study of teacher attitudes to be carried out after the training of the teachers to see the possible impact of a course in inclusive education on their attitudes. Many previous studies have indicated such effect. Stella et al. (2007) concluded that even after taking a relatively short 20-hour module, it can bring about some statistically significant changes in student teachers’ knowledge, attitudes and confidence level towards inclusion.

Investigating others than teachers’ attitudes is needed in Georgia; with this regard, the perceptions of parents, peers, school administrators and others can be studied; Observation of a classroom practice and in-depth interviews can provide valuable information.

Research on attitudes is needed in other regions of Georgia as well. The awareness and opinions may differ in urban and rural settings.

The category of children with special needs is very broad category and as mentioned earlier, not all these categories were covered by the questionnaire. The investigation of attitudes towards one type or degree of special need may provide more valuable information about the attitudes.

Generally, there is a dearth of studies in special needs education in Georgia. Prior to the study when I sought information and relevant literature in the field of special needs education in Georgia, no overview or history of special needs education in Georgia was found. Several studies can be done using different methodologies and instruments in order to write a holistic history of the development of Special needs education in Georgia. Without understanding the historical and cultural nature of the

system in a particular context, a right model for inclusion can be difficult to implement.

Investigations may be done in special institutions. Special educators' attitudes to inclusive education may be an interesting topic as well for the researchers.

5.5 Recommendations to policy-makers

The study results revealed that the lack of policy is one of the main barriers to inclusive education in Georgia. Without clear policy inclusive culture can not be developed.

Policy or law on inclusive education should stress the importance of teacher education and promote the programmes to equip the teachers with knowledge about children with special needs and inclusion. Teachers who are aware about these issues during pre-service training are more expected to have positive attitudes. I recommend improving teacher preparation courses at the university. The faculty of Special Needs Education should offer students indispensable training in inclusive education.

Many studies have indicated that teachers, although they support the idea of inclusion, express that they lack skills necessary to work with children with special needs they are not confident and lack self-efficacy. Pre-service teachers should already possess positive attitudes when they enter the classroom to meet the needs of all students. Empirical studies provide evidence that training programmes during the initial preparation stage are effective in the development and enhancement of student teacher beliefs. Many researchers argue that the addition of a single course may not be effective and preparation of general educators to work in inclusive settings requires a more extensive infusion of special education content in the curriculum and also more intensive and varied field experiences in settings with children both with and without disabilities (Romi & Leyser 2006).

In-service training can focus on specific skill acquisition necessary to accommodate the exceptional learner within the mainstream (Iarrivee 1979).

The teachers should understand what inclusion really implies and thus they need a deeper insight. Teachers should understand the possible positive outcomes of inclusion for all children and not only for children with special needs. Most of the teachers believe that inclusion is to include children with disabilities in schools and thus are not aware that inclusion is for all children. Therefore providing teachers with more information and literature about inclusive education is of vital importance.

In order to provide the in-service teachers with specific knowledge and skills to increase their confidence in teaching children with special needs, further in-service retraining and strengthening the collaboration between special and regular teachers is required. Teachers need to be encouraged to express their concerns and hopes and more support should be delivered to them.

The government should work more intensively to implement the idea of inclusive education in order to impel positive attitudes towards disability

As inclusive education is a new phenomenon in Georgia, some schools should be selected for pilot testing in each region.

A clear policy on inclusive education is prerequisite to success. Several projects carried out by NGOs, have a fragmental character and almost end after the project is finished. The society's attitudes cannot be changed if the idea of inclusion is not marketed all over the country as the norm for each school.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 A: Questionnaire in Georgian

ქვემოთ მოცემული კითხვარის პასუხები/შედეგები გამოყენებული იქნება კვლევისთვის „თბილისის სკოლების მასწავლებლების დამოკიდებულება განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროების მქონე მოსწავლეთა საჯარო სკოლებში სწავლისადმი“. კვლევა ტარდება ქ. ოსლოს უნივერსიტეტის მაგისტრანტის მიერ და ხორციელდება ნორვეგია-საქართველოს ერთობლივი პროექტის ფარგლებში (პროექტი - “ზოგადსაგანმანათლებლო სკოლებში ინკლუზიური განათლების დანერგვა თბილისის ათი სკოლისათვის“.)

მასალის გამოყენება და დაცვა:

- გამოკითხვაში მონაწილეობა ნებაყოფლობითია და ნებისმიერ დროს, ყოველგვარი ახსნა-განმარტების გარეშე, შეგიძლიათ, მონაწილეობაზე უარი თქვათ.
- მასალის ანონიმურობა გარანტირებულია.

გმადლობთ თანამშრომლობისათვის

კითხვარი მასწავლებლებისთვის

1. სქესი

მდედრობითი [] მამრობითი []

2. ასაკი []

3. სწავლების გამოცდილება/სტაჟი

10 წელზე ნაკლები []

10–20 წელი []

20 წელზე მეტი []

4.გაქვთ თუ არა სპეციალური განათლება ან ხომ არ გაგივლიათ რაიმე სახის ტრეინინგი სპეციალური განათლების შესახებ?

არა []

ხანმოკლე []

დიპლომი []

ხარისხი []

5.იმ სკოლაში, სადაც თქვენ მუშაობთ, სწავლობენ თუ არა განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროების მქონე ბავშვები?

დიახ [] არა []

6.რომელ კლასებში ასწავლით?

1-6 []

7-9 []

10-12 []

7. მოსწავლეთა რაოდენობა სკოლაში

500 მოსწავლეზე ნაკლები []

501–1000 []

1000 მოსწავლეზე მეტი []

8.მოსწავლეთა საშუალო რაოდენობა კლასში

20 მოსწავლეზე ნაკლები []

21–35 []

35–45 []

45 მოსწავლეზე მეტი []

9. გყავთ თუ არა კლასში განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეები?

დიახ [] არა []

დადებითი პასუხის შემთხვევაში, რა კატეგორიების:

მხედველობის შეზღუდვის მქონე []

ფიზიკური შეზღუდვის მქონე []

ემოციური და ქცევითი დარღვევების მქონე []

სწავლის უნარის დაქვეითებით []

გონებრივი შეზღუდვის მქონე []

სმენის შეზღუდვის მქონე []

განსაკუთრებული ნიჭის მქონე ბავშვები []

მასწავლებელთა შეხედულება/დამოკიდებულება

ინკლუზიური განათლება გულისხმობს სპეციალური საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროების მქონე მოსწავლეთა ჩართვას ზოგადსაგანმანათლებლო პროცესში სხვა მოსწავლეებთან ერთად.

გთხოვთ შეავსოთ კითხვარი და წრე შემოავლოთ იმ ციფრს, რომელიც ნათლად გამოხატავს თქვენს დამოკიდებულებას.

მართალი და მცდარი პასუხი არ არსებობს, საუკეთესოა ის პასუხი, რომელიც თქვენს აზრს გამოხატავს.

სკალა (1) აბსოლუტურად ვეთანხმები, (2) ვეთანხმები, (3) დარწმუნებული არ ვარ, (4) არ ვეთანხმები, (5) კატეგორიულად არ ვეთანხმები

შეკითხვაზე დამატებითი კომენტარი შეგიძლიათ კითხვის ქვემოთ, ან კითხვარის ბოლოს დაწეროთ.

1.მეთოდები, რომლებსაც მასწავლებლები ჩვეულებრივ კლასში იყენებენ, განსაკუთრებული საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეებთანაც გამოდგება.

1 2 3 4 5

2.განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეები კარგად გრძნობენ თავს და სწავლას თავს ართმევენ მხოლოდ სპეციალურ, ცალკე კლასებში.

1 2 3 4 5

3.განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლე მასწავლებლისგან მეტ ყურადღებასა და მოთმინებას ითხოვს.

1 2 3 4 5

4. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვის ჩვეულებრივ კლასში სწავლა, სირთულეების მიუხედავად, ის აკადემიურ განვითარებას შეუწყობს ხელს.

1 2 3 4 5

5. მასწავლებლის მხრიდან განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვებზე დახარჯული ყურადღება სხვა მოსწავლეებს აკლდება.

1 2 3 4 5

6.თითოეული მოსწავლე განსხვავებულია და ეს განსხვავებულობა არ უნდა იქცეს პრობლემად.

1 2 3 4 5

7. ჩვეულებრივ კლასში, sadac განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვია, ძნელია წესრიგის შენარჩუნება.

1 2 3 4 5

8. „ჩვეულებრივი“ მასწავლებლები, რომელთაც არა აქვთ სპეციალური განათლება, განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეებთან მუშაობისთვის კომპეტენტურნი არიან.

1 2 3 4 5

9. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეების შესაძლო არაადეკვატური საქციელი ცუდი მაგალითი იქნება სხვა ბავშვებისთვის.

1 2 3 4 5

10. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვის სპეციალურ კლასში/სკოლაში იზოლირება mis სოციალურ და ემოციურ განვითარებაზე უარყოფითად მოქმედებს.

1 2 3 4 5

11. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვი აკადემიურ ცოდნას უფრო სწრაფად შეიძენს სპეციალურ კლასში (სკოლაში), ვიდრე ჩვეულებრივ სკოლაში.

1 2 3 4 5

12. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა უმეტესობას არ შეუძლიათ სხვა ბავშვების ტემპით შეასრულონ დავალებები.

1 2 3 4 5

13. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა სასწავლო პროცესში ჩართვა მიითხოვს მნიშვნელოვან ცვლილებებს ჩვეულებრივი საკლასო ოთახის ორგანიზებაში.

1 2 3 4 5

14. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა უმეტესობა ადექვატურად იქცევა საკლასო ოთახში.

1 2 3 4 5

15. ჩვეულებრივი კლასის მოსწავლეებისთვის კონტაქტი განსაკუთრებული საჭიროების მქონე მოსწავლეებთან შეიძლება საზიანო იყოს.

1 2 3 4 5

16. ჩვეულებრივი კლასის მასწავლებლებს შესაფერისი ტრეინინგი აქვთ გავლილი იმისთვის, რომ ასწავლონ განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე მოსწავლეებს.

1 2 3 4 5

17. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვები მასწავლებლისგან დამატებით დროს ითხოვენ

1 2 3 4 5

18. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვის სასწავლო პროცესში ჩართვა მის სოციალურ დამოუკიდებლობას უწყობს ხელს

1 2 3 4 5

19. მოსალოდნელია, რომ განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვები ქცევის პრობლემებს გამოავლენენ ჩვეულებრივ კლასში

1 2 3 4 5

20. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვის სწავლება უკეთესად ხორციელდება რესურს–ოთახის ან სპეციალური პედაგოგების, ვიდრე ჩვეულებრივი კლასის მასწავლებლის მიერ.

1 2 3 4 5

21. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა სასწავლო პროცესში ჩართვა შეიძლება, სასარგებლო იყოს დანარჩენი მოსწავლეებისათვის.

1 2 3 4 5

22. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვებს, აუცილებელია, აუხსნა გარკვევით, ნათლად და ზუსტად, რა და როგორ უნდა გააკეთონ.

1 2 3 4 5

23. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა ჩვეულებრივ სკოლებში სწავლა უარყოფით გავლენას ახდენს მათსავე ემოციურ განვითარებაზე.

1 2 3 4 5

24. მეტი თავისუფლება საკლასო ოთახში არეულობას იწვევს.

1 2 3 4 5

25. ჩვეულებრივი კლასის მოსწავლეები გარიყავენ განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვს.

1 2 3 4 5

26. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვის მშობლები კლასის მასწავლებლისთვის იმაზე მეტ სირთულეს წარმოადგენენ, ვიდრე სხვა დანარჩენი ბავშვების მშობლები.

1 2 3 4 5

27. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა ინკლუზირება აუცილებელს გახდის ჩვეულებრივი სკოლის მასწავლებლების გადამზადებასა და კვალიფიკაციის ამაღლებას.

1 2 3 4 5

28. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვებს ჩვეულებრივ კლასში სწავლის შესაძლებლობა უნდა მიეცეთ.

1 2 3 4 5

29. განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროებების მქონე ბავშვთა სასწავლო პროცესში ჩართვა ჩვეულებრივ კლასში სწავლისა და სწავლების პროცესში არეულობას ქმნის.

1 2 3 4 5

30. ინკლუზიური განათლების დანერგვა თავიდან რამდენიმე სპეციალურად არჩეულ სკოლაში უნდა განხორციელდეს.

1 2 3 4 5

31. თბილისის საზოგადოება სრულად არის ინფორმირებული ინკლუზიური განათლების პრინციპების შესახებ.

1 2 3 4 5

32. სპეციალური სკოლები უნდა გაუქმდეს და განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროების მქონე ყველა ბავშვმა საჯარო სკოლაში უნდა ისწავლოს.

1 2 3 4 5

33. მხოლოდ შეზღუდული შესაძლებლობის მსუბუქი ფორმის ბავშვები უნდა სწავლობდნენ საჯარო სკოლებში.

1 2 3 4 5

34. თბილისის ჩვეულებრივი სკოლები განსაკუთრებული საგანმანათლებლო საჭიროების მქონე ბავშვების მოთხოვნილებების შესაბამისად არის მოწყობილი

1 2 3 4 5

კომენტარები:

.....

გმადლობთ!

Appendix 1B: Questionnaire in English

The questionnaire which you are asked to fill in is the main instrument used in the study carried out by a master degree student at the university of Oslo. The study will investigate the” Teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of children with special needs into regular schools in Tbilisi”.

Use and protection of data:

- Participation in the survey is voluntary
- The anonymity of the data is guaranteed by the researcher.

Thank you for collaboration.

Questionnaire for the teachers

Section I: Background variables

Please, put a tick on your responses to the following items.

1. Gender

Female [☐] Male [☐]

2. Your age [☐]

3. Teaching experience

Less than 10 years [☐]

10–20 years [☐]

Over 20 years [☐]

4. Do you have training in Special Needs or Inclusive Education?None at all [☐]Short [☐]Diploma [☐]Degree [☐]**5. Does the school are you currently teaching have children with special needs?**Yes [☐] No [☐]**6. At what class level are you teaching?**1-6 [☐]7-9 [☐]10-12 [☐]**7. What is the number of pupils in the school?**Less than 500 [☐]501–1000 [☐]Over 1000 [☐]**8. What is the average number of pupils per class?**Less than 20 [☐]21–35 [☐]35–45 [☐]Over 45 [☐]

9. Do you have children with special needs in your class?

YES [☐] NO [☐]

If YES, which category?

Visually impaired [☐]

Physically Handicapped [☐]

Emotional and behavioural disabled [☐]

Learning disabled [☐]

Mentally challenged [☐]

Hearing Impaired [☐]

Gifted and Talented [☐]

Section II: Teachers' opinions

Inclusion means that children with special needs will have possibility to study in an ordinary school together with their peers.

Please circle the number that best describes your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. There are no correct answers; the best answers are those that honestly reflect your opinions and feelings.

Scale: (1) ***Strongly agree*** (2) ***Agree*** (3) ***Uncertain*** (4) ***Disagree*** (5) ***Strongly disagree***

If you have some comments regarding any statement, Please state them either on the end of the statement, or below the questionnaire. For example, if you agree with one question only with regard of one particular disability, you can explain it in your comments etc.

1.Many of the methods teachers use with regular students in a classroom are appropriate for special needs students as well.

1 2 3 4 5

2.The needs of students with special needs can be best served through special, separate classes.

1 2 3 4 5

3.A child with special needs' behavior generally requires more patience from the teacher than does the behavior of a child without special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Being in a regular classroom in spite of the challenges will promote the academic growth of the child with special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The extra attention student with special needs require will be to the detriment of the other students.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Each student is different and this difference should be looked at as a resource and not as a problem or barrier.

1 2 3 4 5

7. It is difficult to maintain order in a regular classroom that contains a child with special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Regular teachers (who do not have special education) possess a great deal of the expertise necessary to work with students with special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

9. The behavior of students with special needs will set a bad example for the other students.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Isolation in a special class/school has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of a student with special needs

1 2 3 4 5

11. The student with special needs will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom (school) than in a regular classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Most students with special needs do not have the capability to complete their assignments at the same pace with other students.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Inclusion of student with special needs will require significant changes in regular classroom procedures

1 2 3 4 5

14. Most student with special needs are well-behaved in the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

15. The contact regular-class students have with included students may be harmful.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Regular-classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach students with special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

17. Students with special needs will monopolize the teachers' time.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Inclusion of a student with special needs will promote his/her social independence.

1 2 3 4 5

19. It is likely that a student with special needs will exhibit behaviour problems in a regular classroom setting.

1 2 3 4 5

20. Diagnostic-prescriptive teaching is better done by resource-room or special teachers than by regular-classroom teachers.

1 2 3 4 5

21. The inclusion of students with special needs can be beneficial for regular students.

1 2 3 4 5

22. Students with special needs need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it.

1 2 3 4 5

23. Inclusion of students with special needs into regular schools is likely to have a negative on their emotional development.

1 2 3 4 5

24. Increased freedom in the classroom creates too much confusion.

1 2 3 4 5

25. The student with special needs will be socially isolated by regular classroom students.

1 2 3 4 5

26. Parents of a child with special needs present no greater problem for a classroom teacher than those of a normal child.

1 2 3 4 5

27. Inclusion of student with special needs will necessitate extensive retraining of regular teachers.

1 2 3 4 5

28. The students with special needs should be given every opportunity to function in the regular-classroom setting, where possible.

1 2 3 4 5

29. Students with special needs are likely to create confusion in the teaching and learning procedures.

1 2 3 4 5

30. The inclusive education initiative should be piloted in selected schools before implementation.

1 2 3 4 5

31. The society in Tbilisi is fully sensitized on the principles of inclusive education.

1 2 3 4 5

32. Special schools should be abolished and all student with special needs included into the regular schools.

1 2 3 4 5

33. Only those students with special needs who have mild conditions should be included into the mainstream.

1 2 3 4 5

34. Regular schools in Tbilisi are adequately equipped to accommodate students with special needs.

1 2 3 4 5

Please make further comments in the space provided below:

.....

Thank you!

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Is there a policy guidelines paper already constructed on inclusive education?

1. Are the schools in Tbilisi facilitated to support inclusive education?
2. Have there been initiatives to train teachers and school administrators in the inclusive education principles?
3. How can you briefly evaluate the tendency (if any) which is the result of the project (Project in cooperation with Norway)?
4. Is the teacher professional education and training sufficient?
5. What are the reasons for the slow implementation of inclusive education in Georgia?
6. How is regular education and special education cooperating to achieve inclusive education?
7. In your opinion, is Georgia ready to implement inclusive education?
8. How is the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science with other ministries in the planning for Inclusive education?
9. What is the real situation in Georgia now with regard the implementation of inclusive education?
10. What other comments would you make about the implementation process of Inclusive Education in Georgia?

Appendix 3: Items analysed separately

<p>Item 1. Many of the methods teachers use with regular students in a classroom are appropriate for special needs students as well.</p> <p>Mean: Without 3,11; With 2,79; Sig. ,008</p>
<p>3.A special needs child's behavior generally requires more patience from the teacher than does the behavior of a child without special needs.</p> <p>Mean: Without 1,89; With 1,72; Sig. ,09</p>
<p>4. Being in regular classroom in spite of the challenges will promote the academic growth of the special needs child.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2, 42; With 2,18; sig., ,025</p>
<p>5. The extra attention special needs student require will be to the detriment of the other students</p> <p>Mean: Without 2,51; With 2, 75; sig., 0,77</p>
<p>6. Each student is different and this difference should be looked at as a resource and not as a problem or barrier.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2, 11; With 1,91; sig., 0,53</p>
<p>7. It is difficult to maintain order in a regular classroom that contains a special needs child.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2, 79; With 3, 06; Sig., 0,52</p>
<p>9. The behaviour of special needs students will set a bad example for the other students.</p>

Mean: Without: 2, 65; With: 3, 34; Sig., 000
<p>11. The special needs child will probably develop academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom (school) than in a regular classroom.</p> <p>Mean: Without: 2,53; With: 2,86; sig.,008</p>
<p>15. The contact regular-class students have with included students maybe harmful.</p> <p>Mean: Without 3, 28; With 3, 72; sig., 000</p>
<p>18. Inclusion of special needs children will promote his/her social independence.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2,26; With 2,03; sig., 014</p>
<p>21. The inclusion of children with special needs can be beneficial for regular students.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2,73; With 2, 43; sig., 005</p>
<p>23. Inclusion of students with special needs into regular schools is likely to have negative effect on their emotional development.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2, 96; With 3, 54; sig.,000</p>
<p>25. The child with special needs will be socially isolated by regular classroom students.</p> <p>Mean: Without 3, 16; With 3,77; sig.,000</p>
<p>27. Inclusion of children with special needs will necessitate extensive retraining of regular teachers.</p> <p>Mean: Without 2,33; With 2,02; sig., 009</p>

28. The children with special needs should be given every opportunity to function in the regular classroom setting, where possible.

Mean: Without 2, 55; With 2,14; sig., 001

32. Special schools should be abolished and all children with special needs included into the regular schools.

Mean: Without 3,42; With 3,02; Sig.,001

33. Only those children with special needs who have mild conditions should be included into the mainstream

Mean: Without 2,67; With 2,37; Sig.,012

Appendix 4: Reliability of the scale

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	205	68,8
	Excluded(a)	93	31,2
	Total	298	100,0

a Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,853	29

Appendix 5: Univariate analysis of variance

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
type with/without	1	without	97
	2	with	191
schoolSN 5.Does the school you are currently teaching have children with SN	1	Yes	212
	2	No	76

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Total inclusion index (29 items)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2283,472(a)	3	761,157	3,995	,008
Intercept	909633,452	1	909633,452	4774,587	,000
type	22,262	1	22,262	,117	,733
schoolSN	1170,257	1	1170,257	6,143	,014
type * schoolSN	48,284	1	48,284	,253	,615
Error	54106,441	284	190,516		
Total	2017415,000	288			
Corrected Total	56389,913	287			

a R Squared = ,040 (Adjusted R Squared = ,030)

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
total Total inclusion index (29 items) * type with/without * schoolSN 5.Does the school you are currently teaching have children with SN	288	96,6%	10	3,4%	298	100,0%

Report

Total inclusion index (29 items)

type with/without	SchoolSN 5.Does the school you are currently teaching have children with SN	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1 without	1 Yes	84,50	36	12,539
	2 No	77,48	61	14,391
	Total	80,08	97	14,085
2 with	1 Yes	84,12	176	13,750
	2 No	79,47	15	14,865
	Total	83,75	191	13,856
Total	1 Yes	84,18	212	13,524
	2 No	77,87	76	14,407
	Total	82,52	288	14,017

[illegible]

	Frequency/ percent	45 15,5%	143 49,3%	50 17,2%	50 17,2%	2 .7%	298 100%
item17 32. Students with SN will monopolize the teachers' time							
	Frequency percent	63 21,7%	182 62,8%	24 8,3%	15 5,2%	6 2,1%	290 100%
item22 37.Children with SN need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it							
	Frequency/ percent	65 22,1%	192 65,3%	27 9,2%	8 2,7%	2 ,7%	294 100%
item32 47.Special schools should be abolished and all children with SN should be included into the regular schools							
	Frequency/ percent	13 4,5%	50 17,5%	123 43,0%	77 26,9%	23 8,0%	286 100%
item33 48.Only those children with SN who have mild conditions should be included into the mainstream							
Item	Frequency/ Percent	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
	Frequency/ percent	33 11,4%	146 50,3%	62 21,4%	39 13,4%	10 3,4%	290 100%